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THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

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MOST of us know the now doubly interesting story of how Thackeray said to Millais: "I met a clever young dog in Rome, who will one day run you hard for the Presidency," of how the prophecy came true in the election of the late Lord Leighton, whose place has now been filled by his ancient rival:—The King is dead—long live the King!

That there may be, perhaps, better painters in England than either of them has had little to do with their election. The popular voice, no doubt, has endorsed the Academic choice; and in that of Sir J. E. Millais, they place at the official head of the artists of England, not only a great painter, but a representative Englishman. Millais has always been essentially English in feeling. Even in his "Pre-Raphaelite" days, when he seemed so *bizarre* and foreign to his fellow-craftsmen brought up upon the falsities of an effete system, and to his fellow-countrymen at large, unable to judge for themselves, he seemed as "beyond the mark of painting," he, nevertheless, perhaps unconsciously to himself at first, certainly unconsciously to them, interpreted a phase of the national sentiment.

Sir John Millais was born in Southampton on June 8th 1829. His father was a native of Jersey. In 1834 the family removed to Dinan in Brittany, where Millais showed a precocious talent for drawing, by sketching the officers of the garrison. After a return to Jersey, the final move was made in 1838 to Lon-

don, principally on young Millais' account. His father decided to consult Sir Martin Shee, the then ruling President of the Academy, as to his son's possible future if he made painting a profession. Fortunately, Sir Martin, by his instant recognition of the boy's genius, made a successful bid for the grateful encumbrance of posterity, which he had hardly succeeded in doing by his Academic labors. Accordingly, Millais, at nine years of age, was placed under the care of one Henry Sass, who kept the most widely known preparatory school for entrance to the Academy course in the London of his day. "Several of his contemporaries are still living, who remember him as quite a little boy, with a holland blouse, a belt and a falling collar."

Two years later Millais entered the Academy schools. He took all possible honors, and when he was seventeen he made his *début* upon the Exhibition walls as the much belauded painter of a certain picture called "Pizarro," painted after the Academic fashion and quite in keeping with the sentiment of that body and the condition of affairs in the art world of 1846. Then came that quaint movement, already forestalled by Ford Madox Brown, whose influence, through Dante Rossetti, largely contributed to it. I mean, of course, "Pre-Raphaelitism" which with autocratic intolerance the Academy, followed by the critics and the public, shrieked to annihilate; little knowing it was to be the salvation of English painting. Whether we agree