

larger share of this world's goods, married about the same time, and during the next few years the three friends and their wives lived together in close and intimate companionship. There were merry meetings at the wombat's cage in the Zoological Gardens and week-end visits to Morris's new house in Kent, where Burne-Jones decorated the halls with frescoes from mediæval romances and Rossetti composed nonsense verses on his friends' names until the walls rang with shouts of laughter. But the same enthusiasm for art and worship of beauty filled their lives. "I never knew such men," said a lady who often sat to Burne-Jones and his comrades in those ardent young days. "It was being in a new world to be with them. I sat to them and was there with them, and they were different to every one else I ever saw. And I was a holy thing to them. I was a holy thing to them" (i. 169). It was a wonderful time for all the members of the little band. Ruskin was writing his "Stones of Venice" and "Seven Lamps"; Holman Hunt, Millais, and Madox Brown were at work on great pictures, and Morris used to bring new cantos of the "Earthly Paradise" and read them aloud, while Burne-Jones painted scenes from the story of Cupid and Psyche or the "Morte d'Arthur." Of an evening a young poet "with glorious red hair" would drop in and pace up and down the studio, reciting his latest verses while the artist designed cartoons for stained glass. Then the furnishing and decorating of Morris's new home, the Red House at Upton, led to the foundation of the firm in which Morris, Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and Madox Brown were all partners. "Have you heard of the Co.?" wrote Burne-Jones to his old friend Cormell Price, in Russia. "It's made of Topsy, Marshall, Faulkner, Brown, Webb, Rossetti and me. We are partners and have a manufactory and make stained glass, furniture, jewellery, decoration, and pictures. We have many commissions, and shall probably roll in yellow carriages by the time you come back" (i. 227). Burne-Jones always looked back with affection on the happy freedom of those days. "We never felt poor," he said, "because we agreed to do