

after completeness made him comparatively indifferent to praise or blame. For years, he said, he stood like St. Sebastian, a mark for the shafts of every sharp-tongued critic or ignorant journalist, but he worked on, careless of abuse and ridicule, and too much absorbed in his own conceptions to notice these attacks. When fame and rewards came it was the same. "What difference can it make," he asked, "if they give me medals and decorations, as long as I cannot do what I wish in art and am miserable in consequence?" Yet Burne-Jones was, on the whole, a singularly fortunate man. His lot was a far happier one than that of most original artists. He lived long enough to come into his own, and from the first he won the admiration of those whose sympathy he most valued. Culture, as Seeley once said, was the note of all his art, and for this reason it appealed in an especial manner to the finest intellects of the day, to Tennyson and Lowell, to Walter Pater and George Eliot. And he was still more fortunate in his family and friends and the home-life of which Lady Burne-Jones gives us so many charming glimpses.

In 1856, that *annus mirabilis* when he first met Ruskin and Rossetti and started on his career as a painter, Burne-Jones became engaged to an old friend's sister, Georgiana Macdonald, then a girl of fifteen, whom he had known at Birmingham, and now met again in London. "There was a year," wrote the artist long afterwards, "in which I think it never rained nor clouded, but was blue summer from Christmas to Christmas, and London streets glittered and it was always morning and the air sweet and full of bells." He always liked to remember that his betrothal took place on June 9—the day of the year on which the poet of the "Vita Nuova" first saw and loved Beatrice. Four years later, on the same 9th of June, Burne-Jones was married in Manchester Cathedral, and brought his young wife to share his bachelor lodgings in Bloomsbury. His sole fortune consisted of £30, besides which he had a few commissions for pictures, most of which had been already paid for in advance. Rossetti and Morris, who fortunately had a