PART ONE

THE PICTURES ON THE WALLS
Beginning in 1760, London's seasonal art exhibitions annually attracted a throng of open-pursed men and women who came to look and often to buy. More and more it became the fashion to decorate the walls of one's home with newly created art—first the mansions of the wealthy, then, from the Regency years onward, the proliferating suburban villas that were conspicuous evidence of an increasingly numerous and prosperous middle class. Prominent among the several kinds of paintings they bought were ones whose subjects were drawn from the poems, plays, and novels that lined their library or drawing-room shelves. Two territories of the English imagination thus were joined, those ruled respectively by the visual image and the printed word. The pictures whose subjects were taken from, or at least nominally associated with, English literature were, in effect, extensions of the books themselves: they were detached forms of book illustration, in which were constantly assimilated the literary and artistic tastes of the time. They combined to produce a tertium quid, a new kind of imaginative activity in which the separate experiences of reading and beholding coalesced. Readers, as the eighteenth-century painter Henry Fuseli put it, were turned into spectators.  

This development, of no small importance in the history of modern British culture, is the subject of the following pages. Because this book is in some ways an unusual kind of historical study, its introduction must take the equally unconventional form of a critical account of the evidence on which it is necessarily based, and which, of equal necessity, determines its limitations. Lest the reader suspect a bid for his sympathy, I have almost refrained from repeating Dickens's anguished capitals when he complained in 1854 of the trouble he had in writing Hard Times in the cramped space of weekly installments: "The difficulty . . . is CRUSH-
The difficulty here has been of another, though no less formidable, kind. It is not every day that a rash student commits himself to writing about a visual subject only to discover, early on, that most of the pertinent primary evidence is invisible.

There has also been the problem of definition, of limitation. What, within the confines of these chapters, is a "literary picture," not in the art historian's sense of a painting that in some way intimates a story, but in the more restricted sense, uniformly adopted here, of one that is somehow related to English literature? The term covers a broad, uninterrupted spectrum. At one end is the painting that transfers a scene in a poem, play, or novel from the pages of a book to canvas or a wood panel. At the other is the painting that is merely embellished with a poetic quotation meant to set or intensify the tone of the picture but whose subject has no relation to the work alluded to. Thus there are innumerable shades of literary relevance, from faithful illustration to the application of a vaguely appropriate motto. In amassing and ordering my evidence, I have drawn a waver­ing line across the wide expanse of literature-related art, deciding, too often on the basis of insufficient or unreliable evidence, which pictures, seen or unseen, were at least marginally illustrative and therefore should be included, and which should be set to one side, for use in chapter 9, as examples of pictures that are related to literature only through the tenuous attachment of an epigraph. In the absence of the paintings themselves, for reasons that will soon be clear, I have had no choice but to separate the eligible from the ineligible with hair-raising arbitrariness.

Somewhere in the continuum, the word from loses its ordinary meaning; and though the formula "Picture A is from Literary Work B" will regularly be used for its convenience, the reader should be notified that from is used throughout with the broadest license ever allowed to any preposition.

Another necessarily arbitrary decision had to be made at the beginning of my research. For urgently practical reasons, its scope has been restricted to oil paintings of larger than miniature size. To have included also watercolors and drawings of literary subjects would have made an already virtually unmanageable subject truly impossible to cope with. It is reasonable to suppose that, if they had been included, their presence would not have seriously affected the generalizations based on oil paintings alone; they would merely have demonstrated the fairly obvious fact that certain kinds of literary subjects are suitable for the delicate treatment that watercolor, pencil, or pen and ink make possible, and certain other subjects are not. But it has not been possible to exclude all non-oil pictures for the simple reason that in an exasperating number of records, including some catalogues of the annual London exhibitions, the medium of a listed work is not specified. Despite initially rigid rules of exclusion, a few watercolors have been consciously admitted, and a few more have doubtless slipped in undetected.

Such a limitation has the ironical but not unwelcome effect of largely omitting the two great figures in British art who best exemplify the mingling, indeed the merging, of poetry and painting: William Blake and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. "Well, Mr. Blake," said Sir Joshua Reynolds, "I hear you despise our art of oil painting." "No, Sir Joshua," Blake replied, "I don't despise it; but I like fresco better." Years later, in the catalogue of his unsuccessful one-man show (1809), Blake's view was less tactfully expressed: "Let the works of modern Artists since Rubens' time," he
declared, "witness the villany of some one at that time, who first brought oil Painting into general opinion and practice: since which we have never had a Picture painted, that could shew itself by the side of an earlier production." Rossetti, by contrast, had nothing against oils, though he should have favored them more than he did, because, as Ruskin advised him, "oil fetches always about six or seven times as much as water-colour. Very foolish it is, but so it is." But it so happens that few of his many illustrations of literary subjects were produced in oil. In any event, the graphic oeuvres of both Blake and Rossetti, as well as their very different ways of assimilating poetry and painting, have been, and continue to be, intensively discussed elsewhere, and I have no contribution to make to the literature on those perennial topics.

Fixing the scope of the study, however, does not alter the nature of the material to be studied. Every historian of literate culture is confronted, sooner or later, by the silences of the written and printed record as it comes down to him. But one who sets out to narrate an episode in the history of the English visual imagination is constantly confronted with blank spaces on the wall where pictures should be. Much of his primary evidence is literally invisible. Although art historians may well lament the disappearance of many works they could profitably use in their studies of individual artists, they can more or less comfortably make do with what survives, with amplification as required from secondary sources such as biographies and contemporary art criticism. But when broad tendencies are in question, as in any study of widely shared and evolving artistic taste, it is the sheer quantity of material, both primary and secondary, that counts: the more there is, the more confident and illuminating can be the inferences drawn from it.

To say that a pursuit of this kind involves simultaneous feast and famine is not a paradox but a statement of the bare truth. The documents of art history provide, at once, both too much material (the all but overwhelming number of recorded paintings) and too little; for most of the surviving evidence, the actual pictures apart, is both elusive and, when found, less dependably informative than one would wish. Though copious, it is fraught with undiscoverables, imponderables, ambiguities, and deceptions. We see the pictures of which we have record but which are now lost through the cracked, sometimes virtually opaque glasses that are all that the printed documentation permits.

Considerations such as these soon extinguished whatever hopes I initially entertained that my report on the occurrence of the literary subject in British art could rest on a solid base of quantification and its academic respectability ensured by the application of computer science. Figures will be found in some abundance in Parts Two and Three, but throughout the book the arithmetic, stated or implied, is tinged with an unavoidable dash of impressionism.

The recorded oil paintings of English literary subjects produced by British artists between 1760 and 1900 that fall on the "eligible" side of the demarcation I have drawn number somewhere between ten and twelve thousand, give or take a few hundred. Of these, only some seven or eight percent are known to be in public galleries, and an undeterminable number remain in private collections. Paintings now lost or inaccessible that are represented by engravings or photographs account for another five or six percent. Therefore, of the total number of pictures individually
recorded as having existed at one time or another, only about fifteen percent, at most, can be seen today in any form.

But this data base, large though it is, actually is only a generous sample of the total number of literary paintings that were turned out in those 140 years. It consists of the ones listed in the standard sources, the catalogues of the annual London exhibitions: the Royal Academy and the minor institutions that had inspired it, the [Incorporated] Society of Artists and the Free Society of Artists; the Academy's two major nineteenth-century satellites, the British Institution and the [Royal] Society of British Artists, and the [Royal] Scottish Academy; catalogues of modern exhibitions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artists, the printed records of sales, and biographies of individual artists and the sketchy or in a few cases exhaustive catalogues raisonnés sometimes appended to them. (Ideally, the catalogues of provincial art exhibitions should have been searched as well, for paintings not shown in London or Edinburgh, but the results would hardly have justified the labor involved.)

Thousands of relevant pictures, however, escaped all such nets. There were several ways, increasingly favored by artists, of bypassing the exhibitions. Many painters sold pictures directly to customers who visited their studios. Sometimes they hired rooms like the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly for one-man shows, as did Haydon and Martin early in the century and Ford Madox Brown in 1865. Many pictures by exceptionally promising or well-established artists were commissioned and sold privately, or increasingly, as the Victorian years passed, by way of dealers; many more were submitted to the annual exhibitions but were rejected and therefore unlisted, and then disappeared from view. There is no record of this voluminous commerce except insofar as some pictures subsequently left traces in the annals of auction rooms or surfaced in present-day galleries and private collections. It is beyond question that the unrecorded ones considerably outnumbered those in the formal records. In a large exhibition of manuscripts, pictures, and memorabilia related to Robert Burns, held in 1896, forty-three paintings were shown, only eight of which had passed through any public exhibition at the time they came from the artist's easel."

How large, to resort to the unsinkable cliche, was the iceberg beneath this visible tip? There is no way of telling. The reader hot for certainties must bear in mind that the figures in Parts Two and Three are introduced solely for the purpose of rough comparison, and that the only rule of thumb to be applied in an attempt to convert the sample into the hidden totality is to multiply by a factor of X. The only firm guarantee that can be offered is that all such approximations are conservative—perhaps extremely so.

If more than ninety percent of the recorded pictures are lost, except for reproductions in a certain number of instances, what happened to them? One explanation is that, with the exception of a number of celebrated examples, they were not protected from neglect and oblivion by mere virtue of the names attached to them. None of the major nineteenth-century British artists made a specialty of literary paintings. Earlier, Henry Fuseli (1741–1825) had probably come closest to doing so, but his was not a name to conjure with in the sale room. The great names—Turner, Wilkie, the Pre-Raphaelites, Watts, Leighton, Burne-Jones, and the rest—painted, among them, a fair number of pictures with literary asso-

*For some notion of the over-all size of the nineteenth-century trade in paintings, see chapter 4, below.
ciations, but these figure only incidentally in their total oeuvres. The
nineteenth-century artist who was most significantly affected by English
literature, not only in respect to subject but in his whole conception of art,
was the Frenchman Eugène Delacroix, in whose canon a severe gap would
be left if his many paintings from Shakespeare, Scott, and Byron were
deleted. The most prolific artists in a literary way were men like William
Hamilton, Thomas Stothard, and Henry Howard late in the eighteenth
and early nineteenth centuries and such popular and well-paid Victorian

Surrounding them were a host of near-nonentities such as the virtually
untraceable Alfred J. Woolmer, who exhibited no fewer than eighty-four
pictures from English literature between 1827 and 1886, mostly at the
unrevolutionary London equivalent of the Salon des Refusés, the Society
of British Artists. Woolmer seems to have had a preternaturally shrewd
instinct for the hackneyed; the list of subjects he chose is a perfect epitome
of the range of literary characters and situations most painted for the
market. Few examples of this indefatigable artist's output have been loc­
cated, and only a handful of engravings. Like Woolmer, many of the
painters of literary subjects survive only as recurrent names in the cata­
logues of the annual exhibitions. Their work is unrepresented even in
that huge collection of iconographical records, the Witt Library of the
Courtauld Institute.

Literary paintings suffered, perhaps more than most other genres, the
same fates that met Victorian art in general during its worst period of
devaluation in the first half of the present century. In 1930 one of Clark­
son Stanfield's marine paintings, The Abandoned, for which Sir Thomas
Baring had paid 500 guineas in 1856, was auctioned at Sotheby's for seven
pounds. Seven years later, Daniel Maclise's huge (ten by seven feet)
Ordeal by Touch (1846) brought a derisory £2 12s. 6d. In the most pre­
cipitous decline of all, John Martin's “Day of Judgment” canvases, equally
large, which were so sensationally popular in the 1850s that they were
toured in Great Britain and the United States as profit-making exhibi­
tions, were sold in 1935 for less than seven pounds for the three. (Today
they occupy prominent walls in the Tate Gallery.)

Many Victorian paintings were cheap to begin with. Some artists priced
their small ones (“cabinet pictures”) at no more than three to ten pounds.
Hence, when householders or their heirs grew tired of them or they
simply passed from fashion, they were discarded without a qualm. There
was a similar casualty rate among the equivalent artifacts of “popular
literature”—yellowback novels, shilling shockers, penny-a-part serials,
and the other ephemeral pabulum of the English mass-reading public.
Most, having served their trivial purpose, were thrown out with the rub­
bish, and what survived became a casualty of the wastepaper drives dur­
ing the two world wars. No one knows how many of their painted counter­
parts, large or small, recorded or unrecorded, passed through parish
bazaars and dealers in secondhand goods on their way to ultimate de­
struction or to be bought by impecunious artists for the sake of the canvas
alone, which they proceeded to overpaint with new subjects. Most of the
paintings commissioned by the publishers of illustrated books—a particu­
larly busy form of artistic activity in the last part of the eighteenth century
and most of the nineteenth—were discarded once they had been en­
graved. Only a small portion of the thousands of designs made by such
prolific illustrators as Thomas Stothard survive in their original form.

Some paintings self-destructed, thanks to the widespread use of bitumen ("Dead Sea pitch"), which added to new canvases the dark quality of age prized in Old Master paintings. The diary-keeping artist Joseph Farington once noted that one Wilder, a picture restorer, was "taking off Asphaltum [one kind of bitumen] in such quantities from Opie's picture from Tempest—that with the child—as to roll it up in Balls like cobler's wax." Scottish artists seem to have been especially devoted to the pernicious substance, with the result that many of their pictures survive only as sad, unrestorable wrecks. In addition, many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British paintings perished in fires at the country houses to which much contemporary art gravitated. Alexander Runciman's twelve ceiling pictures on themes from Ossian (1772), for instance, were destroyed when Penicuik House burned in 1899.

As tastes changed, many pictures were valued solely for their ornate and expensive frames; and when a day of reckoning came, either the canvases were thrown away and the frames retained or sold, or picture and frame were sold together to a dealer, who might keep them in dusty stock for many years, for the sake of the frame alone. In the 1930s, a painting by the parricide artist Richard Dadd surfaced in the picture-frame department of the Army and Navy Stores in London, where, for all anybody knew, it may have been since the establishment opened in the 1870s. It was subsequently owned by Sacheverell Sitwell and is now in the Tate.

Numerous run-of-the-mine nineteenth-century paintings do survive, their whereabouts unknown to the art world, in the lumber rooms of country houses, even on the walls of the few remaining homes where the Victorian period is preserved as if under a bell jar. They can be seen too in the public rooms and shadowy passages of country inns: in 1945, Evelyn Waugh came across John Martin's Adam's First Sight of Eve (pl. 271), in very dirty condition, in the Kilmeny Hotel, Ardrossan. The hotel's owners, the Imperial Chemical Industries, had it cleaned and presented it to the Glasgow Art Gallery. Finally, hundreds of nineteenth-century canvases, rolled up or stretched inside weighty frames, rest in the cellars of public galleries in Britain and elsewhere. Most have never been photographed, and some have not even been identified or catalogued.

Apart from those that can be resurrected on request from the catacombs of museums, the only means of knowing what the recorded but now invisible paintings are—or were—like is through reproductions. Some pictures lent to exhibitions by private owners were photographed for the printed catalogue of the show, and those passing through the hands of the major London dealers nowadays are routinely photographed and copies made available in art reference libraries. But totally lost paintings can be envisioned only through the engravings made of many popular ones—an unsatisfactory resort—and, even less satisfactorily, through descriptions found in print, most often in reviews of the exhibitions where they were first seen.

Reproductions and descriptions, usually so brief as to be of little help to the imagination, exist for only a small proportion of the total number of paintings exhibited; and for all the rest, one has only the titles, often with a poetic quotation added, found during a volume-by-volume, page-by-page search of the catalogues. Here the real insufficiency and ambiguity
of the evidence makes itself felt, frustrating any attempt at reasonably exact quantification. Several pictures with the same title may be attributed to a given artist over a short or extended span of years, either at a single exhibiting institution or at two or, in rare cases, even three. There is no way of knowing whether all but the first were copies, versions, replicas, repetitions, replications—whatever the terminology—efforts by the artist to exploit the vogue of a particular subject, or, indeed, the favorable reception of his own first rendering of it, or whether the later ones were so different in composition as to amount to fresh creations. The difficulty is like that of the literary scholar who must cope with the bibliographical-textual uncertainties of new editions, revisions, and reprints, and their relation to the work as the author initially delivered it to his publisher. But such textual problems can eventually be solved, because the books in question exist and can be examined. The paintings normally do not and therefore cannot. There is the further possibility, in the case of a title that turns up in two or three consecutive years, that the several entries represent the same canvas, still unsold. How should one count these apparently similar or identical compositions, often so vaguely described by their titles, that cross and recross our distant view as stage armies appear and reappear?*

In compiling lists of paintings with literary associations, by all odds the most frequent and exasperating source of uncertainty, a veritably hydra-headed problem, lies in the titles of the pictures themselves. Normally there is no such difficulty in literary or bibliographical scholarship: most printed books continue to bear the title they had when first published, no matter how often reprinted. Cases such as those of Rasselas, always called The Prince of Abyssinia in Dr. Johnson’s lifetime, Clara Reeve’s The Champion of Virtue (1777), which became The Old English Baron the next year, and Shelley’s The Revolt of Islam, first published as Laon and Cythna, are rare in literary history (except, say, for the frequent retitling of modern books when they suffer a sea change from Britain to America or vice versa). Not so in British art, where the listings in catalogues are more in the nature of temporary descriptive labels than fixed baptismal names. Hence, for one thing, the same picture may have been hung at one exhibition under one name and at a second under another, and possibly is known at its present place of exhibition under a third. Thus:

- Frith’s The Love Token / Scene from The Bride of Lammermoor
- Etty’s A Bevy of Fair Women / The Origin of Marriage / The World Before the Flood / The Marriage Festival Previous to the Deluge
- Cope’s Scene from Goldsmith / Age and Whispering Lovers
- Ward’s Byron’s Early Love / The Dance
- Mulready’s Burchell and Sophia / Haymaking
- Orchardson’s Casus Belli / The Challenge
- Paton’s Beati Mundo Corde / How an Angel Roved Sir Galahad over Dern Mere
- Gilbert’s Scene from Henry VIII / Ego et Rex Meus

An unknown number of paintings with literary subjects lie buried in the records because their titles do not identify them as such, and only external evidence occasionally enables them to be identified. At the Society of Artists in 1764, James Lambert showed a picture called simply A Storm. Horace Walpole obliged posterity by writing in his copy of the catalogue, *Part of the answer depends on the actual practice at the time. Until 1844, pictures previously shown at the Royal Academy could be admitted to the British Institution exhibitions at the discretion of the committee on hanging, which seems to have maintained a liberal policy in this respect. After that date, there was an absolute ban on paintings that had been exhibited elsewhere. But pictures that had been hung once, but were not sold, could berehung after several years had passed. In my computations, I have assumed, where there was no substantial evidence to the contrary, that the same title recorded in exhibitions in two successive years indicates a single canvas that went unsold the first year and that if a title is repeated in the records after a lapse of two or more years, either at the same institution or a different one, it represents a new picture. Both these assumptions are open to objection, but they probably serve as well as any others that could be adopted.
“Edgar, Lear, and Kent.” Lambert also showed “It’s companion.” Walpole: “Ye witches meeting Macbeth and Banquo.” Only by accident does one discover that paintings entered in catalogues as *The Orphan and the Bird*, *Waiting for an Answer, Back to Back*, and *The Life’s Story* were pictures from *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and *Othello*, respectively.

On the other hand—a more frequent pitfall or source of perplexity—many pictures with titles associating them with literature prove to have subjects with no literary connection. Any picture called simply *Twelfth Night* may or may not have had a Shakespearean subject: the festival of *Twelfth Night* was a frequent subject with such Dutch and Flemish painters as Jan Steen and Jordaens. *Twelfth Night* paintings from their brushes were at Buckingham Palace, Woburn, and Chatsworth in early Victorian times, so it is reasonable to suppose that new English versions of the same subject, with or without Shakespearean reference, were intended to fill a demand from people who wished to emulate royalty, the Duke of Bedford, or the Duke of Devonshire. There was also the English penchant for naming sporting and domestic animals after literary figures. As early as 1762, only two years after the first volumes of Sterne’s novel were published, a racehorse was named Tristram Shandy and George Stubbs painted its portrait. The Perdita shown in 1776 was not Shakespeare’s heroine but a mare belonging to Sir John Lister Kaye, Bart.; Sir Peter Teazle, shown at the Royal Academy in 1789, had won the Derby for Lord Derby two years earlier; and—to approach the dawn of Victoria’s reign itself—in 1835 the art critic for the *Literary Gazette*, having spotted the title *Tom Jones* in the Academy catalogue, “eagerly sought for the picture, wondering what lively incident in that unrivalled representation of real life Mr. C [Abraham Cooper, the well-known animal painter] had selected for his subject; when, behold! we found that Fielding’s hero was merely the name of another dray-horse!”

In similar fashion, John MacWhirter’s *The Three Witches* (1889) was a portrayal, not of the Weird Sisters so familiar to English art-lovers for well over a century, but of three gnarled tree trunks with lightning striking what might reasonably be regarded as a blasted heath. Macbeth’s witches were nowhere in sight. Pictures called *The Last Chapter in Pamela* and *Alice in Wonderland* turn out to have been examples of that perennially popular subject in English, as in European, art, studies of a girl or woman reading.

Of the various classes of ambiguous titles, the largest is the one generated by artists’ practice of applying literary heroines’ names to routine portraits or figure studies. To lend a touch of class, a rustic maiden could be called Phoebe or a Greek girl Haidee, though in fact the name was all the picture owed to *As You Like It* or *Don Juan*. Thus the records of Victorian painting are replete with studies titled Jessica, Nell, Dora, Helena, Viola, Elaine, Sophia, each of which may or not have had any literary reference. Some, of course, may have been the actual names of the sitters, because the English then had a habit of naming their daughters, like their animals, after literary characters. (The noticeable increase in the number of Enids pictured after 1880 may reflect the popularity of Enid as a baptismal name following the appearance of Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King* in 1859.)

Even assuming that some of these names did have genuine literary reference, it is often hard to be sure what work is alluded to. With
Ophelias, Desdemonas, Mirandas, Rosalinds, and Juliets, there is seldom
a problem. But which Beatrice (Dante? Much Ado About Nothing? The
Cenci? Or the Beatrix of Henry Esmond?)? Which Olivia (Twelfth Night? The
Vicar of Wakefield?)? Which Portia (Julius Caesar? The Merchant of Venice?)?
Which Maria (Twelfth Night? A Sentimental Journey?)?

A picture bearing the name of a single character might actually have
been a tableau with several characters, of whom the eponymous one was
merely the most prominent or the one most likely to sell the picture. The
tableau itself might not be specified: what, among several possibilities, was
Ophelia doing in a given painting shown with merely her name—having a
nervous interview with Hamlet, describing Hamlet's madness to Polonius,
giving Gertrude, or later in the play Laertes, a glimpse of her own mad­
ness, or floating in the stream? The same bothersome vagueness occurs in
the customary form of titles that merely designate the work without spec­
ifying the scene.

Other announced subjects may have come from alternative sources.
Paintings with Titania, Puck, Oberon, and the fairies probably were de­
vised from A Midsummer Night's Dream, but not necessarily so; Fuseli's
numerous designs involving such figures came not only from Shake­
speare but from Milton's "L'Allegro" and Wieland's Oberon. Pictures of
biblical subjects, especially the Creation and Fall of Man, may or may not
have come from Paradise Lost. Paintings of the Deluge not explicitly at­
tributed to Genesis may have been derived not from Milton but from the
Swiss poet-artist Salomon Gessner's Idyllen, which was the stated source of
a number of paintings exhibited in London. Like a number of other
familiar subjects in British art, moreover, those from the Bible were often
traceable as much to the Old Masters as to any literary source.

Of the many paintings depicting scenes from English and Scottish his­
tory—Queen Katherine and Wolsey, the murder of the young princes in
the Tower, the escape of Mary Queen of Scots from Loch Leven,
Leicester and Amy Robsart—which came straight from Shakespeare or
Scott (as the case may be) and which from the history books? Ordinarily
this is an unanswerable question, for even if the painting was equipped
with a reference to a literary source, its iconography and general treat­
ment may well have associated it more firmly with Shakespeare's or Scott's
historical source than with the play or novel cited.

Sometimes paintings were given titles intended to cash in on the cur­
cent popularity of a writer, even though the subject had nothing to do
with him. When James McNeill Whistler's The White Girl was rejected by
the Royal Academy in 1862, he sent it to a dealer, who rechristened it The
Woman in White in a patent attempt to exploit the fame of Wilkie Collins's
novel, published only two years earlier. In a letter to the Athenaeum, the
artist denied any intention of illustrating it. "It so happens, indeed," he
said, "that I have never read it. My painting simply represents a girl
dressed in white standing in front of a white curtain."16 (The third name
applied to it stuck: Symphony in White, Number One.) Three years later, a
picture titled Our Mutual Friend was exhibited when the serialization of
Dickens's novel, with which it had no connection whatsoever, was only
two-thirds completed. (By a kind of reverse action, scenes of rural festi­
tivities titled Under the Greenwood Tree, echoing a song in As You Like It, and
several paintings called Far from the Madding Crowd, echoing Gray's "Ele­
gy," were exhibited before Hardy's novels with those titles appeared in
1872 and 1874. It is not impossible that Hardy's choice of the titles was influenced by their familiar occurrence in exhibition catalogues.)

Despite all the hazards and deceptions to be recognized and avoided as we utilize the manifold iconographic and written records of British art, an authentic notion of what actually happened when English literature and painting overlapped begins to take shape. If we are able to compensate for our imperfect vision and make allowance for the irreparable distortion inherent in the materials used, we may arrive not very far from the truth. The paintings discussed and reproduced here faithfully represent the various ways, sometimes broadly shared, sometimes idiosyncratic, in which artists envisioned English literature on behalf of the middle-class public who paid them. We can say of these literary pictures what Henry James once said of English art in general: "... English painting interests me chiefly, not as painting, but as English. It throws little light, on the whole, on the art of Titian and of Rembrandt; but it throws a light which is to me always fresh, always abundant, always fortunate, on the turn of the English mind. It is far from being the most successful manifestation of that mind; but it adds a good deal to our knowledge of it."