THE ROMANTIC ERA

Wordsworth

Despite his central role in awakening his countrymen to the spiritual significance of nature, and therefore as a kind of patron saint to landscape painters, Wordsworth did not figure prominently in nineteenth-century art. His name occurred more often as the author of the mottoes affixed to paintings than as the source of the subjects themselves. Of the approximately sixty quotations from Wordsworth in the exhibition catalogues, only a dozen appeared before 1850, the year of his death. The first appeared in the 1824 catalogue of the Society of British Artists, in connection with an Ullswater landscape by T. J. Hofland.

No more than a dozen Wordsworth poems were illustrated in the twenty or so gallery paintings recorded, and half of these came from the two editions (1798, 1800) of *Lyrical Ballads*. The poet’s patron, Sir George Beaumont, illustrated five poems in landscapes: “The Thorn,” exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1806; “Lucy Gray” and “Peele Castle,” engraved for the 1815 collected edition of Wordsworth’s poems; “The White Doe of Rylstone,” engraved as the frontispiece to the volume of that name, published in the same year; and “Peter Bell,” reproduced as the frontispiece to Wordsworth’s 1819 volume. There were at least four later pictures from “The White Doe,” which gave artists an opportunity to attach a literary reference to pictures of Bolton Abbey, the poem’s setting and, as it happened, a favorite subject of painting. The most notable of these, indeed one of the very few pictures of Wordsworthian themes to survive, was John William Inchbold’s (pl. 310).

In 1851, the year after the poet’s death, Richard Redgrave added a far-fetched touch of timely literary association to a painting of a verdant copse by captioning it: *A Poet’s Study. Wordsworth is Said to Have Sat for Hours in This Glen with Coleridge and Southey.*

Coleridge

Except for Wordsworth, whose poem “The Thorn” was illustrated by Beaumont’s painting in 1806, Coleridge was the first English Romantic poet to supply a subject for art. His friend George Dawe showed at the Academy in 1812, along with a portrait of Coleridge, a painting listed as *Genevieve: From a Poem by T. [sic] Coleridge*, a portrayal, said a reviewer, of a “young man on his knee singing to a Lady who is pensively and elegantly leaning on a pedestal, . . . an impassioned exemplification of . . . pleasing lines” from the poem “Love.” (Three other pictures from the same poem would be painted in the course of the years, one of them, in 1838, being a view of the Rhine, with a group in the foreground suggested by Coleridge’s lines.) In 1817, Coleridge’s “Ode to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, on the Twenty-Fourth Stanza in her ‘Passage over Mount Gothard’,” first published in 1799, was the inspiration for Arthur Perring’s painting *Maternal Delight*.

All told, there were about thirty-five paintings from Coleridge. Surprisingly, in the light of the poem’s gorgeous exotic imagery, only one from “Kubla Khan” is recorded, and that as late as 1890. It was by two other poems that Coleridge was mainly represented in the art of the century.
The title “The Ancient Mariner” was used for about a dozen recorded pictures, but some of these undoubtedly were merely genre studies of weather-beaten old salts. We do not know which scenes from the poem—the specter ship, the killing of the albatross, the encounter with the wedding guest—were depicted in the remaining paintings. Of those explicitly associated with Coleridge in the catalogues, perhaps the most noteworthy were the ones Joseph Severn painted in Rome in 1833, *Life in Death* and *Death*. It may have been one of these that Severn exhibited at the Royal Academy six years later under the title *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*. When David Scott saw the pictures in Rome, he recorded in his journal that *Life in Death* was “a failure in my view of the poem—he having made her beautiful; the old mariner and the ship very good.”

Scott’s eye, however, was scarcely unbiased at the time, for he was already at work on a series of illustrations of the poem, about which he had corresponded briefly with Coleridge himself. In a letter mostly taken up with complaints about his ill health and lack of friends, the poet said, “I acknowledge and duly appreciate the compliment, payed to me, in having selected a poem of mine for ornamental illustration and an alliance of the Sister Arts, Metrical and Graphic Poesy.” Of the twenty-five designs Scott completed and published in 1839, a recent historian of Scottish art has commented, “These interwoven elements of the descriptive and imaginative in the *Ancient Mariner* were so sympathetic to David Scott’s way of thinking, that the resulting illustrations are close visual parallels to the poem. They are, as Dante Gabriel Rossetti remarked, ‘in the truest Coleridgean vein.’”

Subsequently (1863), Joseph Noel Paton exhibited at the Royal Academy two of the twenty illustrations to the poem he produced to be engraved for the Art Union of London’s subscribers.

None of the *Ancient Mariner* oil paintings seem to survive, and only one of the dozen pictures entitled *Christabel*, most of which seem actually to have had some connection with Coleridge’s poem although a few may well have been routine female figure studies with a poetic label stuck on. With one exception, all of the scenes of the spell cast by the enchantress Lady Geraldine upon Sir Leoline’s pious daughter were painted in the second half of the century; it was in them that the old Romantic vein of sorcery was sustained at a time when it had otherwise gone out of fashion in art. The one extant picture that represents the theme is William Dyce’s *Christabel* (RA 1855), an example, Ruskin said, of “one of the false branches of PreRaphaelitism, consisting in the imitation of the old religious masters.”

**SOUTHEY**

In his time, Robert Southey was regarded as the equal of Wordsworth and Coleridge; the three were the “Lake School” of English poets, though Southey eventually dropped from the trinity. The number of paintings derived from Southey in the course of the century (some twenty) was roughly the same as those from Wordsworth; from Coleridge came somewhat more. While Coleridge was represented by a number of pictures from “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and “Christabel” in the period 1848–1900, and post-1840 paintings from Wordsworth were spaced fairly evenly across the same years, those from Southey were concentrated in the decades 1845–65, when his reputation was drifting away from the company it had kept.
Half a dozen paintings came from his *Roderick the Last of the Goths* (1814), a romantic narrative poem. One of them, F. X. Winterhalter's *Florinda* (pl. 311), was bought by the Queen as a present for her husband. The *Times* counted eleven "female nymphs" in the large canvas (any other species is exceedingly rare), and hastened to add that "though warm in tone"—a characteristically cautious Victorian euphemism—it was "quite devoid of coarseness."  

Another of Southey's exotic poems, *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), figured in three paintings, each by a different artist, shown at the Royal Academy in 1845-46. His early ballad "Mary, the Maid of the Inn" was the subject of a painting by Samuel DeWilde, one of that artist's few nontheatrical pictures, in 1800. Mary, one more figure, though a minor one, in the poetic and artistic gallery of mad heroines, returned to the walls of the Royal Academy eighty years later, in a painting by J. R. Reid. Not that there was any revival of interest in Southey generally; as the *Times* pointed out, the ballad had been "of late resuscitated for penny readings," a familiar and innocuous kind of public entertainment that was responsible for keeping many favorite poems and "dramatic passages" in the popular repertory. The repeated portrayal, in 1807 (Mulready), 1853, 1858, and twice in 1865, of Old Kaspar and the inquisitive boy in Southey's "The Battle of Blenheim" ("But what good came of it at last?" / Quoth little Peterkin. / 'Why, that I cannot tell,' said he; / 'But 'twas a famous victory.'") doubtless owed something to the poem's popularity as a recital piece as well as its presence in anthologies.

**SCOTT**

In 1828, when Sir Walter Scott attended the annual dinner of the Royal Academy for the first time after being elected Honorary Antiquary, Sir Thomas Lawrence, the president, toasted him in these words: "If he had been forgotten it had been as a gap in our great feast and all things
unbecoming.” Lawrence might have chosen a more felicitous quotation from Shakespeare—the one he used had the inadvertent but sinister effect of casting him as Lady Macbeth and Scott as the doomed Banquo—but the Shakespearean gesture, like the occasion itself, was wholly appropriate, for Scott was at the time seriously thought to be Shakespeare’s equal. Besides, some formal recognition of Scott’s service to the nation’s artistic establishment was long overdue, for his poetry and novels had already given profitable employment to many painters. “How many pencils have already been employed,” exclaimed the Literary Gazette three years later, “and how many will in future times be employed, in embodying the conceptions of that great writer!” The retrospect and the prophecy were both true, especially the latter. In the ensuing two decades, pictures inspired by Scott would dominate the galleries; and their popularity, swelling the income of hundreds of artists, would continue to the very end of the century. In 1881, Edwin Abbey reported that Sir James Dromgole Linton, who received 1,000 guineas apiece for his pictures, had “an order from a Manchester gentleman to paint two subjects and six single figures from each of Walter Scott’s novels. These chaps,” Abbey added, “are all aggravatingly prosperous”—as they would continue to be so long as Manchester millionaires (to say nothing of prosperous and patriotic Scotsmen) wanted to be surrounded by pictures from Scott.

One of the earliest Scott paintings (pl. 312) was derived from almost the first work the Edinburgh advocate-antiquarian published, “The Fire-King,” a melodramatic-supernatural ballad that he contributed to Matthew Gregory (“Monk”) Lewis’s “hobgoblin repast,” a collection called Tales of Wonder (1801). It was a Gothick subject peculiarly adapted to the talents of Henry Fuseli, who was in fact the artist. In 1807, the first paintings from Scott appeared at the Royal Academy, two scenes from The Lay of the Last Minstrel, published two years earlier; one was by an artist

312. Henry Fuseli, The Fire King Appears to Count Albert (1801–10) (Victoria & Albert Museum, Crown Copyright). The first illustration of a published work by Sir Walter Scott, a ballad titled “The Fire King,” in which a lapsed Christian crusader, Count Albert, descends into a demonic cave to obtain a magic sword.
on the threshold of a prosperous career, Francis Philip Stephanoff. The next year, an equally promising Scots painter, John Watson (later Sir John Gordon-Watson), exhibited in Edinburgh a painting from the same poem, and another artist showed yet another scene, *The Minstrel on His Journey to the Mansion of the Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth*, at the Royal Academy. At the newly founded British Institution the following year (1809), there were no fewer than six paintings from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Of the twenty paintings of literary subjects at the two London exhibitions in 1811, two were from *Marmion* (1808) and five from *The Lady of the Lake* (1810).

The Scott vogue was well under way, but it would not begin to approach its full magnitude until after the first Waverley novel appeared in 1814. It was in his fiction that Scott's descriptive powers became most amply apparent. His verbal pictures sometimes seemed actually to forestall graphic illustration; in 1819, Charles Leslie wrote to his fellow American, Washington Allston, "I have heard that you are making some designs from Sir Walter Scott's novels. They afford excellent material, though the picturesque scenes with which they abound are almost too highly finished by the author to leave anything for the painter to do but merely follow him, which is some disadvantage." Leslie soon came to terms with the disadvantage: two years later, he made designs for an edition of *Kenilworth*."

As a pictorialist, with the minor exception of Ann Radcliffe, Scott had no illustrious predecessors among novelists, nor was he to have any peers in his time. He offered his readers, many painters among them, detailed portraits and figure studies, with antiquarianly accurate costume and accoutrement; meticulous interiors, ranging from cottages to castles, which constantly reminded critics of Dutch realistic paintings; a profusion of dramatic and pathetic scenes such as might be painted by history or narrative artists. Reviewers found it scarcely possible to discuss his romances without invoking painterly analogies. And when, in 1820, J. L. Adolphus argued at length that the Waverley novels, anonymously published, were from the same pen that had written and signed Scott's poems, among the evidence he offered was their common characteristic of strong pictorialism: "they seem to view Nature as through a Painter's eyes, selecting and combining features as a painter would." In France, where Scott was almost as popular as he was in Britain, the perception of his pictorial gift was especially acute. Decades later, when Sainte-Beuve called him "an immortal painter," he was merely repeating what had long since become a platitude. Contemporary French artists, most notably Delacroix, repeatedly took subjects from the Waverley romances.* At the Salon of 1830 alone, no fewer than thirty paintings from Scott were hung.

As we saw in chapter 3, from his first poetic romances onward, Scott gave a powerful impetus to landscape painting at large. In *Modern Painters*, Ruskin declared that "Scott's enjoyment of Nature is incomparably greater than that of any other poet I know," including Tennyson and Keats, and that "to give a complete analysis of all the feelings which appear to be traceable in Scott's allusions to landscape scenery . . . would require a volume." Scott, Ruskin said—his highest form of praise in such a context—was the Turner of verbal scenic artists."

Scott had a gentleman's interest in painting. He learned "the pleasure of looking at fine pictures," he said, when he visited Penicuik House in the company of a fellow law student, a scion of the Clerk family who owned
the estate. Conspicuous among the paintings he would have seen there were Alexander Runciman's dozen scenes from Ossian. In his fiction, Scott constantly refers to painters, some three dozen in all, including Raphael, Rubens, Teniers, Salvator Rosa, Claude, Snyders, Wouvermans, Van Dyck; and he alludes to his fellow Scotsman David Wilkie in at least half a dozen of his novels. In his literary criticism as well as, inferentially, in his imaginative writing, he endorsed the concept of *ut pictura poesis*. Scott, however, was in no way a connoisseur. Visitors to Abbotsford, expecting to find him surrounded by art of a quality commensurate with his talent for painting word pictures, were disillusioned when they saw what he actually possessed. "He talked of scenery as he wrote of it—like a painter," recalled Leslie; "and yet for pictures, as works of art, he had little or no taste, nor did he pretend to any. . . . There were things hanging on the walls of his dining-room, which no eye possessing sensibility to what is excellent in art could have endured."11

By the time of Scott's death in 1832, the book illustration of his works had become a sizable industry.12 The best-selling poems had been graced by engravings by Richard Westall, who also illustrated several of the early novels beginning with *Guy Mannering* and *The Monastery* in 1821. More than thirty artists, including Wilkie, Landseer, Leslie, Martin, Bonington, Mulready, and Stanfield, contributed to the so-called Magnum Opus edition of 1829–33. Each engraving was made from a small oil painting, some of which, Landseer's (pl. 314) and Wilkie's among them, were hung at the annual exhibitions. Turner prepared twenty-four designs for Robert Cadell's edition of Scott's poetry (1834) and forty for the companion edition of his nonfictional works in prose (1834–36); these were all pictures of localities associated with Scott's subjects or with Scott biography.13 Cadell wanted Turner also to illustrate his edition of the novels, but various circumstances stood in the way.*

Collected editions of the novels appeared at the incredible average rate of one every two years, some with sets of freshly drawn illustrations, others with reused ones. These joined the portfolios of separate engravings that had begun to appear in the 1820s. A typical example was a portfolio of *Illustrations to Scott's Poetical Works* (1834) that contained forty plates, including three by Turner which were replicas of designs already found in his *Provincial Antiquities*. The taste of the time, which demanded galleries of Byron's and Shakespeare's "beauties" (in this case corporeal, not textual), encouraged the production of an album of *Portraits of the Principal Female Characters in the Waverley Novels* (1832–33) and the *Waverley Gallery* of the same (1840–42), not all of whose women—such was the variety of Scott's casts—were beauties by any definition. Beginning in 1865, the Scottish equivalent of the London Art Union, the Royal Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland, issued annual volumes of engravings, each devoted to scenes and characters from a single Scott novel (or sometimes, a Burns poem). In general magazines and the art press, meanwhile, appeared illustrated essays on the topography of the individual poems and novels. As late as 1887, the *Art Journal* ran a series of articles on "Sir Walter Scott's Country" with illustrations by John McWhirter.

Writing to her friend Sir William Elford, Mary Russell Mitford, the author best remembered for her sketches of country life, *Our Village*, praised the newly published *Ivanhoe* (1819): "I know nothing so rich, so

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*Turner's *Fingal's Cave* (RA 1832) was exhibited with a quotation from Scott's verse romance *The Lord of the Isles*. Although that spectacular outcropping of basalt columns on the Isle of Staffa had long been known to artists, it was only after the poem was published in 1815 that it became a recurrent subject of "sublime" landscape painting.
Isaac Pocock alone was responsible for at least nine such dramatizations. He was, in addition, an early minor link between painting and literature. He was the son of a marine artist, a pupil of Romney and, later, Sir William Beechey, and between 1803 and 1818 he exhibited many pictures at the Royal Academy and the British Institution. Among them were a number of familiar literary subjects, Sterne's Maria, Musidora, the Lady in Cotnus, and Prospero and Miranda. He was one of the very first illustrators of Scott: at the British Institution, he showed four designs from The Lay of the Last Minstrel (1809) and The Death of Marmion (1810). After inheriting some property from an uncle in 1818, he devoted most of his energies to writing for the stage, though none of his subsequent pieces matched the long-lasting popularity of his melodrama The Miller and His Men (1813).

The influence these acting versions had on paintings was sometimes deplored. In 1832, for example, the Athenaeum said of a picture from Rob Roy that it was "a scene from the Rob Roy of the stage, but not from the living page of the great novelist. Has the painter ever read the romance?" In this staging, Jarvie fought Allan Iverach not with the heroic "red-hot coulter of a plough" that Scott specified—a rather difficult property to supply from stock—but with a prosaic, easily portable poker. Possibly the most extensive protest against the theatrical treatment of a Scott novel in a painting was that lodged by Thackeray in 1844 against Robert Scott Lauder's Claverhouse Ordering Merton to be Shot, from Old Mortality:

There sits Claverhouse in the centre in a Kean wig and ringlets, such as was never worn in any age of this world, except at the theatre in 1816, and he scowls with a true melo-dramatic ferocity; and he lifts a sign-post of a finger towards Morton, who forthwith begins to writhe and struggle into an attitude in the midst of a group of subordinate, cuirassed, buff-coated gentry. Morton is represented in tights, slippers, and a tunic . . . and he, too, must proceed to scowl and frown "with a flashing eye and a distended nostril," as they say in the novels,—as Comersal scowls at Widdicumb before the combat between those two chiefs begins; and while they are measuring each other according to the stage wont from the toe of the yellow boot up to the tip of the stage-wig. There is a tragedy heroine in Mr. Lauder's picture, striking her attitude too, to complete the scene. It is entirely unnatural, theatrical. . . .
In another connection, Thackeray later answered in effect the Athenaeum's irritable question "Has the painter ever read the romance?". Whether or not he meant J. J. Ridley (in The Newcomes) to represent a large class of Victorian painters, in one respect Ridley was demonstrably typical, and the answer was "Yes." When Mr. Honeyman comes to live in the lodgings kept by Ridley's father, he "brings a set of Scott's novels, for which he subscribed when at Oxford; and young John James [who had already been illustrating Gothic novels which had fallen into his hands] ... lights upon the volumes, and reads them with such a delight and passion of pleasure as all the delights of future days will scarce equal" (chapter 11). Thackeray implies that a young man of J. J.'s indifferently educated class ("his parents thought of apprenticing him to a tailor") would at least have read Scott. Even the Prince Consort painted scenes from the great novelist in his well-appointed studio.18 Most Victorian artists* who left any record of their reading attested to their devotion to Scott, even though some happened never to illustrate his works in the course of their careers: the self-taught animal painter James Ward, the specialist in religious and allegorical subjects Joseph Noel Paton, the minor Liverpool artist Henry Liverseege, Dante Gabriel Rossetti—a diversified company indeed.19 Burne-Jones reread The Antiquary alone no fewer than twenty-seven times, and urged others to do the same.20 William Quiller Orchardson read the Waverley novels straight through as a boy, and though he never returned to them, his daughter averred that "he knew all about them, and in many instances could repeat the very words."21

George Frederic Watts's earliest inspiration, said his wife, came from the "Greek heroes" and the "knights and cavaliers" of the Waverley novels.22 Looking grumpily back in old age to the literary attachments of his youth, Frith could "recall the bright pictures with which the Wizard of the North filled my imagination." He continued, "Why I did not, as a boy, try to reproduce Rebecca and Ivanhoe, or Jeanie Deans, or Madge Wildfire (I had enough of them afterwards), however imperfectly, is now a wonder to me."23 The grounds of his interest in Scott eventually shifted from early enthusiasm to adult commercialism, as the tone of his parenthesis suggests and as we shall see below. A similar though more precarious sense of the market, exercised when he was still a boy painting at his family's house in Holborn, determined Holman Hunt's choice of a subject from Woodstock for what he hoped would be a vendible canvas: "It belonged to the class of pictures most popular, and so offered a fair chance of sale, as well as due exercise in serious inventiveness." When the picture was finished, he sold it for twenty pounds to a winner of that amount in the Art Union's lottery.24

The recorded Scott pictures total in the neighborhood of one thousand. Of these, some eighty were of subjects from the three major narrative poems, The Lay of the Last Minstrel, Marmion, and The Lady of the Lake. As already noted, their popularity with the reading public was reflected at once in the exhibitions. But as Scott's career as a novelist advanced, pictures from the romances soon outnumbered those from the poems. The vogue of paintings from The Lady of the Lake ended as abruptly as it had begun, about 1819; and notwithstanding its initial popularity between 1813 and 1839, few later pictures from The Lay of the Last Minstrel are...
The first meeting of the lovers. “She bent her beautiful eyes upon the work with which she was busied, and with infinite gravity sate out the two first turns of the matrons upon the balcony; but then, glancing her deep blue eyes a little towards Roland, and observing the embarrassment under which he laboured, now shifting in his chair, and now dangling his cap, the whole man evincing that he was perfectly at a loss how to open the conversation, she could keep her composure no longer, but after a vain struggle broke out into a sincere, though a very involuntary fit of laughing, so richly accompanied by the laughter of her merry eyes, which actually glanced through the tears which the effort filled them with, and by the waving of her rich tresses, that the goddess of smiles herself never looked more lovely than Catherine at that moment” (The Abbot, chap. 11).

Such time lags seldom were matched in the theater, where dramatizations in one form or another of many of the novels were performed only a month or two after publication. The only exceptions were Waverley (1814), first staged in 1822, and Old Mortality (1816), first staged in 1820. The scene painters’ brushes obviously were much faster than those of their colleagues at the easel.

Despite the reading public’s immediate and warm reception of Scott’s first novel, Waverley (1814) was not represented by an exhibited picture until fourteen years had passed, during which time scores of paintings from eighteen of the subsequent novels had been shown. The Bride of Lammermoor, too, was a latecomer to the galleries; the first painting from it was shown nine years after its publication in 1819. Two other novels, The Antiquary and The Black Dwarf (both 1816), were first painted only after a lapse of five and ten years respectively. Portraits of Meg Merrilies, from Guy Mannering (1815), the second of the series, were hung at the British Institution the year after the book appeared; and once the popularity of Scott pictures was established, there was usually an interval of no more than a year or two between the publication of each novel and its advent in the exhibitions. Only The Abbot and Redgauntlet were delayed for as long as four years (1820–24 and 1824–28 respectively).*

The great age of Scott painting was the period 1830–50. During those two decades, well over 400 examples were exhibited, an average of more than twenty a year. In a typically productive year (1843), eight were to be seen at the Royal Academy, ten at the British Institution, seven at the Society of British Artists, and five at the Royal Scottish Academy. At the same exhibitions that year, there were only twenty-five paintings from Shakespeare; and even such other rivals in the regard of early Victorian art lovers as Goldsmith, Burns, and Byron were outnumbered. One easily understands why, when the Prince Consort arranged at that moment for the garden pavilion at Buckingham Palace to be decorated with frescoes from Comus, he had the two side rooms embellished by lesser artists with eight lunettes from Scott, incongruous as the juxtaposition may have seemed.

Pictures from Scott were the bread and butter of a whole succession of artists founded in the first years of the century by William Allan and
David Wilkie. Scott was one of the patrons of Allan, who illustrated *Tales of My Landlord* and several other novels in 1819–20. He was among the subscribers to one of the large paintings Allan brought back from several years' wandering in Russia and Turkey (*The Circassian Captives*), and the Waverley novels inspired a number of Allan's later pictures from Scottish history. Although Wilkie, in the aftermath of his popular scenes from Scottish rural life, was acclaimed as doing for Scotland what Sir Walter Scott was meanwhile doing in fiction, his personal links with Scott were less strong, possibly because he spent most of his time in London and on the Continent rather than in Edinburgh. His *The Reading of a Will* (RA 1820) was related to the scene of Lady Singleside's funeral in *Guy Mannering*, and he provided four illustrations for the Magnum Opus edition.*

The painters who were particularly associated with Scott themes included William Kidd, Robert Scott Lauder and his younger brother James Eckford Lauder, Thomas Duncan, Gourlay Steele, John Faed and his younger brother Thomas, Sam Bough, William Fettes Douglas, Robert Herdman, John Pettie, and Charles Martin Hardie, all born between 1790 and 1858. Several of the other popular Victorian subject painters repeatedly found ideas in Scott. Landseer painted scenes involving his dogs (in fiction and fact), among them a portrait (RA 1833) of the novelist himself seated at the bottom of the Rhymer's Glen (from *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*). Landseer's *Attachment* (RA 1830), derived from Scott's early poem "Helvellyn," on the loyalty of a terrier that guarded the body of its master for three months after he had fallen from the mountain, foreshadowed his more famous treatments of the same theme. At the same time, Landseer painted *A Visit to the Falconer's Nest*, in which a modern authority has found an amalgam of references to *The Abbot* and *The Betrothed.*

Two of Leslie's earliest commissions were his illustrations to *Kenilworth* (1821) and other Waverley novels (1823). For one patron,
317. Robert Scott Lauder, Maître Pierre, Quentin Durward, and Jacqueline (National Institution for the Exhibition of Modern Art 1850) (Forbes Magazine Collection). From Quentin Durward, chap. 4. Like the brothers Faed, the brothers Lauder (James Eckford and Robert Scott) were among the most prominent and prolific illustrators of Scott’s fiction. Both were pupils of William Allan, as was Thomas Faed.

318. James Eckford Lauder, Bailie Duncan MacWheeble at Breakfast (British Institution 1853) (National Gallery of Scotland). Scott’s descriptions often supplied artists with all the details of staffage they needed, as in this Dutch-like portrait of Bradwardine’s “prime minister”: “Before him was a large bicker of oatmeal-porridge, and at the side thereof, a horn-spoon and a bottle of two-penny. Eagerly running his eye over a voluminous law-paper, he from time to time shovelled an immense spoonful of these nutritive viands into his capacious mouth. A pot-bellied Dutch bottle of brandy which stood by, intimated either that this honest limb of the law had taken his morning already, or that he meant to season his porridge with such digestive; or perhaps both circumstances might reasonably be inferred. His night-cap and morning-gown had whilome been of tartan, but, equally cautious and frugal, the honest Bailie had got them dyed black” (Waverley, chap. 66).

The Marquis of Lansdowne, he painted Rebecca in Prison (1821); for another, Lord Egremont, Charles II and the Lady Bellenden, from Old Mortality (pl. 319); for a third, Jeanie Deans and Queen Caroline (RA 1859).

Frith’s numerous but seemingly not very enthusiastic contributions to Scott iconography spanned at least thirty years of his protracted career. His Rebecca and Ivanhoe (1840) had the distinction of being his only painting to be rejected for hanging (by the British Institution). This disappointment was balanced, however, by the acceptance of both this picture and his Madge Wildfire and Jeanie Deans Entering Willingham Church at the other minor exhibition, the Society of British Artists, where, in the preceding year, he had shown a scene from The Lay of the Last Minstrel. A Kenilworth scene (RA 1841) showed Amy Robsart and Leicester parting after one of his visits to Cumnor Place; perhaps because the details of the setting were copied from Knole, the picture, like his Malvolio of the year before, was hung in the Architecture Room of the Royal Academy. While he was working on his large Ramsgate Sands in 1853–54, Frith fell back on Scott subjects to keep his financial ship afloat. He painted four of them for an edition of the novels, and at the Royal Academy in 1854 exhibited The Love Token from The Bride of Lammermoor (pl. 320) and The Poison Cup from Kenilworth, sketches for a pair of pictures commissioned by a patron whom he looked back upon with distaste: “a grumbling ignoramus who could not see the faults that really existed, but discovered plenty of his own making. He grumbled during the progress of the pictures, and grumbled when they were finished; and when he sold them—as he did very shortly—for a great deal more than he had paid for them, he grumbled because he had not got enough.”26 Frith, however, was not so irremediably soured on Scott pictures as to be unable to relish the fact that a later one, a scene of the maid Janet dressing Amy Robsart prior to one of Leicester’s visits, was the fourth of his canvases to need a railing to protect it from the overeager attention of visitors to the Royal Academy (1870).
In the early 1830s, Mulready depicted at least five subjects from Scott’s novels, including a pair from the seldom-painted St. Ronan’s Well (RA 1832). In 1848, Maclise painted for Bulwer-Lytton *Chivalry in the Time of Henry VIII (The Combat of Two Knights)*, from Marmion. A third artist, Augustus Egg, exhibited two Scott paintings, Sir Percy Shafton and Mytie Happer from *The Monastery* (RA 1843) and Dame Ursula and Margaret from *The Fortunes of Nigel* (RA 1854).

Millais painted his first Scott picture, from Peveril of the Peak, when he was only twelve years old (pl. 131). His other subjects from Scott were produced in the middle of his career. Two companion pieces, one portraying Effie Deans and George Staunton and the other Lucy Ashton and Edgar Ravenswood (pl. 321), were exhibited at the King Street Gallery in successive years, 1877–78.

One of Holman Hunt’s first exhibited pictures (RA 1847), not to be confused with his juvenile Woodstock effort for which he got twenty pounds, was *Dr. Rochecliffe Performing Divine Service in the Cottage of Joceline Joliffe*. Another Pre-Raphaelite treatment of Scott was somewhat out of the ordinary: a utilitarian objet d’art rather than a gallery painting. In 1861, the architect John Dando Sedding designed a Gothic oak cabinet to hold his drawings and had it decorated by William Morris’s firm. Shown the next year at the International Exhibition, it had four main panels, allegorizing Sculpture and Painting (both by Burne-Jones), Architecture by Ford Madox Brown and Music by Rossetti, “based on imaginary incidents in the honeymoon of King René of Anjou” in Scott’s *Anne of Geierstein.* One additional link between Scott and the painters of the Pre-Raphaelite–Aesthetic school was James McNeill Whistler’s *Arrangement in Yellow and Gray: Effie Deans* (1876).

The novels differed widely in their popularity as subjects for paintings.* One hundred paintings from *Ivanhoe* are recorded, half of them produced in the heyday of Scott painting, 1830–50. Across the years, Rebecca was the subject of at least thirty-two canvases, including a number of her trial in the vaulted chamber. Isaac of York was often portrayed in his dungeon. There were tournament scenes, and pictures of Lady Rowena and of the swineherd Gurth and the jester Wamba. *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* and *The Bride of Lammermoor* were the sources of some eighty paintings apiece. Fifty-five of those from the former novel featured the Deans sisters. Jeanie was seen in numerous incidents, but most often visiting her sister in prison. Possibly the most famous of the surviv-
PAINTINGS FROM BOOKS

The remaining novels were represented by fewer than forty paintings each, the bottom of the list being occupied by St. Ronan’s Well and The Black Dwarf, each of which accounted for no more than a half-dozen canvases. Most of the pictures from The Pirate appeared during the flush decades, though there were twelve or so after that period. Minna and Brenda Troil and their father were the chief subjects, along with Norna relating her sad history. The popularity of Rob Roy was, for some reason, delayed; down to 1850, only about a dozen paintings are recorded, in the sixties there were a few, and in the period 1870–97 another dozen. Most of these depicted Diana Vernon, alone or with Frank Osbaldistone. In Guy Mannering, the artist’s chief delight was Meg Merrilies the gypsy; Dominie Sampson, Ellangowan, and Julia Mannering were the other repeated figures. Alice Lee and Phoebe Mayflower among the fictional characters, and Charles II among the historical ones, were the central figures of paintings from Woodstock.

Although not painted as often, three novels—Waverley, The Fair Maid of Perth, and A Legend of Montrose—were represented more or less regularly from the time they were first drawn upon until the end of the century. The careers of the rest were erratic. The Fortunes of Nigel did not participate in the 1830–50 vogue; more than half of the recorded paintings were shown after 1850. Peveril of the Peak went unpainted for two decades (1848–68), then returned to mild favor. The relatively poor showing of three other novels evidently was due to their dropping out of favor in mid-Victorian times. After 1850, only seven paintings were made from

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*One picture exhibited with a reference to Kenilworth illustrates how avid painters were for tie-ins with Scott, however tenuous. Frank Howard showed at the Society of British Artists in 1831 a picture entered in the catalogue as “The battle of the pigs. ‘A country wedding at the time of Henry V.’ . . . Vide Master Laneham’s account of one of the pageants at the progress to Kenilworth. [Robert Laneham was an official at the Elizabethan court who left an eyewitness description of the festivities at Kenilworth in 1575.] It is remarkable that it is the only game unmentioned by Sir Walter Scott.” Other artists similarly tried to enhance their pictures of old customs by alluding to Scott; the entry for a painting by John Gilbert (SBA 1839) read, “The feast of fools, a religious farce celebrated in the ancient Romish church. The scene represented more immediately refers to Sir Walter Scott’s novel of The Abbot.” More famous pictures of the sort were MADISE’S Ordeal by Touch (RA 1846) and Orchardson’s The Queen of the Swords (pl. 323).
The Monastery, the last in 1862. With but one exception in each case, the exhibition records of The Betrothed, The Talisman, and Quentin Durward cease in 1847, 1851, and 1853 respectively.

A recent writer has enumerated the main reasons why Scott's novels were so popular: "... their humor, the earthiness and quaintness of the Scottish dialogue, the individuality of the characters, the melodrama, the sentiment, the good spirits, the 'sound' morality, the conventional

322. John Watson Nicol, "For Better for Worse": Rob Roy and the Bailie (RA 1886) (Sheffield City Art Galleries). Prosaic, cautious materialism (the cloth merchant Bailie Nicol Jarvie) and lawless romanticism (Rob Roy MacGregor) reach an understanding of sorts: "If ever I put my sons apprentice," says Rob Roy, "I will gie you the refusal o' them" (Rob Roy, chap. 34).

323. William Quiller Orchardson, The Queen of the Swords (RA 1877) (National Gallery of Scotland). An illustration of one of Scott's lengthy antiquarian footnotes, this one describing "the Sword-Dance ... celebrated in general terms by Olaus Magnus. He seems to have considered it as peculiar to the Norwegians, from whom it may have passed to the Orkneymen and Zetlanders, with other northern customs," etc., etc. (The Pirate, chap. 15)
William Quiller Orchardson, "Casus Belli" (RA 1872) (Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum). Julian Peveril, escorting Alice Bridgenorth and Fenella along a London street, is chevied by two gallants. "That black-eyed sparkler looks as if she had a mind to run away from him," says one, in a loud voice. "Ay," answers the other, "and the blue-eyed trembler looks as if she would fall behind into my loving arms" (Peveril of the Peak, chap. 32).

love story and happy ending, the nature descriptions, the historical accounts, the thrilling battles. . . . "28 Most of these were prominent among the subjects and qualities the average middle-class art-buyer in early and mid-Victorian times required in the canvases he bought, along with colorful costumes and imposing or humble but picturesque settings. Scott’s heroines alone would have guaranteed his popularity among artists and their clientele. Either in figure studies or as central characters in tableaux, they constituted a gallery of women to the Victorian taste—sentimental, strong, humorous, pathetic, victimized, distraught, loyal: Lucy Ashton, the Glee Maiden, Meg Merrilies, Jeanie and Effie Deans, Madge Wildfire, Rebecca, Amy Robsart, Mysie Happer, Minna and Brenda Troil, Diana Vernon, Rose Bradwardine, Alice Lee, Phoebe Mayflower, Catherine Seyton, Flora Maclvor. Nowhere else except in Shakespeare could be found a wider assortment of characters and situations that lent themselves to the many moods of popular Victorian narrative and genre art—comedy, tragedy, pathos, melodrama, humor, family affection, madness—or the different but hardly less appealing spirit of history painting: spectacle and ceremony, combat, heroism, uprisings.

Scott’s poetry and fiction not only constantly fed, but fundamentally affected, the art of Victorian England. The populous school of genre painters stemming from Allan and Wilkie found in Scott the lovingly described eccentrics, the burghers and cottagers, the domestic hearths and country lanes that suggested the themes for countless paintings of everyday life, however independent they might be of any specific literary inspiration. The most characteristic product of Victorian painting, the genre scene, owed more than can easily be estimated to Scott’s popularity in literature and art.

BYRON

The popularity Byron’s poetry enjoyed in the first half of the nineteenth century was amply apparent in the art exhibitions.1 Subjects from
Byron were painted as often as subjects from those other two concurrent favorites, Burns and Scott (counting his poems only), and the number of scenes and figure studies bearing quotations from Byron but not directly related to his subjects was considerably greater than those from all other poets except Shakespeare, Thomson, and Tennyson. Although Byron's critical fortunes began to be reversed as early as the 1830s, his popularity among ordinary readers continued, and the market for pictures from his poems flourished accordingly. Only toward the end of the century did the demand for Byron subjects noticeably fade, just as the poet's critical reputation was slowly being reestablished on a more permanent basis.

The first of the two hundred recorded Byron paintings appeared at the Royal Academy in 1814, two from The Corsair, which was hot off the press; one of these was by Henry Singleton, the other by Henry Corbould, another popular artist of the day who favored literary subjects. At the Royal Academy show of 1817 were seen the first paintings from Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, the first three cantos of which had appeared in 1812–16, and in 1821, the first from Don Juan—a portrayal of Don Juan and Haidee from the brush of a rather improbable Byron illustrator, Lieutenant-Colonel (later General) Sir William Napier, a veteran of the Peninsular War, who after retiring from the army, had turned painter and sculptor, in which capacity he was made an honorary R.A. The following year (1822), the Academy saw paintings from both Mazeppa and Manfred, and the Byron boom in British art was well under way.

Fuseli, the last survivor of the Reynoldsian generation of artists, witnessed its early stage, and presumably approved; John Knowles, his early biographer, said that he "always read [Byron's] writings as soon as they were published, with great avidity." The Princess of Wales asked him to paint for her any passage he wished from The Corsair, a request he seems not to have fulfilled. Byron's poetry, however, does not figure prominently among the books that significantly influenced the coming generation of Victorian artists. The exception was Ford Madox Brown, in whose "love-offering" to his favorite poets in the triptych Chaucer Reading His
David Wilkie, The Maid of Saragossa (RA 1829) (Royal Collection, Copyright Reserved). An episode in Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, canto 1: the “Maid of Saragossa,” Maria Augustin, rallied the faltering Spanish troops during an engagement in the Peninsular Wars, thus joining the company of other heroines of revolutionary legend. Delacroix’s celebrated picture Liberty Leading the People, which this resembles, was painted the following year.

Poems at the Court of Edward III (pl. 121), Byron was ranked with Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Pope, Burns, and Chaucer himself. Brown’s first picture at the Royal Academy (1841) was The Giaour’s Confession, and, more important, he returned time after time to Byronic themes, sometimes treating the subject first in watercolor and subsequently in one or more versions in oil. This was the case in the early 1870s when he made designs for William Michael Rossetti’s edition of Byron’s poetry: The Dream (Byron and Mary Chaworth) (pl. 129), Haidee and Don Juan (pl. 133), The Younger Foscari (Jacopo Foscari), and The Dream of Sardanapalus.

Wilkie drew from Byron only once, in his mid-career picture The Maid of Saragossa (pl. 326), from Childe Harold. Turner exhibited in the 1830s two major landscapes whose titles alluded to Byron, Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage—Italy (pl. 327), and The Bright Stone of Honor (Ehrenbreitstein) and the Tomb of Marceau, also from Childe Harold (RA 1835); but neither canvas, like most of Turner’s “literary” pictures, made any but a glancing reference to the poem itself.* Turner’s book illustrations of Byron were considerably more numerous. He painted a total of twenty-six watercolors, mostly vignettes, to be engraved for various books: Murray’s 1825 and 1832–34 editions of Byron’s works and the Finden brothers’ Landscape and Portrait Illustrations to the Life and Works of Lord Byron (1833–34).³ The Findens were the most active of the several engraver-entrepreneurs who put together Byron picture books. Among these productions, in addition to the Landscape and Portrait Illustrations, were The Byron Gallery (1832) and Findens’ Byron Beauties; or, The Principal Female Characters in Lord Byron’s Poems (1836), all close kin to the keepsake annuals, at the peak of their popularity in those years, which featured similar scenes and portraits.

The disinclination of other leading British painters to take up Byronic subjects contrasts with the appeal they had to French artists, especially Delacroix, at a time when painting in France came under the influence of English literature as mediated especially by French editions and stage adaptations. At the Paris Salon between 1827 and 1849, Delacroix exhibited paintings from Marino Faliero (also British Institution 1828), Sar-
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danapalus, The Giaour, The Corsair, The Prisoner of Chillon, Don Juan, and Lara. He also drew subjects in various media from The Bride of Abydos, Tasso, Mazeppa, and The Two Foscari. 4

Paintings from Byron acquired interest not only from the public's appetite for reading the actual text but also from the performance of a number of his dramas, which, unlike Scott's novels from which stage adaptations were made, had been intended for the theater from the beginning. 5 Of the plays most often represented in painting, Sardanapalus was performed some 186 times in the course of the century, Manfred 165, and Marino Faliero 52. (The Two Foscari and Cain lasted only through a few performances each; contrariwise, Werner, which was seldom painted, was performed 139 times.) The best-received plays had the advantage of celebrated actors like Macready (pl. 328) and Phelps in the leading roles. The qualities that made Byron's dramas successful in the theater (no other major Romantic poet had similar luck) were those that also won them places on the exhibition walls year after year: defiant heroes, melodramatic events, rugged landscapes, raging thunderstorms and other severe visitations of nature, roaring cataracts, raging fires—in short, the Martinesque sublime. Several productions of these plays were landmarks in the history of English stage spectacle. The first staging of Sardanapalus (Drury Lane 1834), with Macready in the role, was lavish enough, but it was outdone by Charles Kean at the Princess' Theatre in 1853–54. This production ran for ninety-three nights largely because of its imposing sets, inspired perhaps by Martin's architectural fantasies in pictures like Belshazzar's Feast and certainly, and more immediately, by the drawings accompanying Layard's recent and well-publicized account of his discovery of Assyrian monuments and palaces. Manfred, opening the same year

327. J. M. W. Turner, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage—Italy (RA 1832) (Tate Gallery, London). Classical landscapists had often peopled their scenes with spatially insignificant human figures whom they identified with a literary subject by the titles they gave the paintings. Turner worked in the same tradition, but in this case the literary association was no stronger than that supplied by his quotation from Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, canto 4: "... and now, fair Italy! Thou art the garden of the world." The painting is as tenuously related to the poem as is Berlioz' Harold in Italy, except for the lines quoted, it might as well have been titled Landscape with Picnickers.
Daniel Maclise, Macready as Werner (RA 1851) (Victoria & Albert Museum, Crown Copyright). Macready first played Werner in 1830; this picture was exhibited the year he gave his last performance in the role.

As Sardanapalus but at Covent Garden, with Ellen Tree as the Witch of the Alps, was similarly celebrated for its pictorial splendor. Occasionally, one of Byron’s so-called Turkish or Oriental tales, which had a different kind of appeal, was adapted for the stage, as was The Bride of Abydos in 1818 and 1847. Passages in Don Juan were staged in a melodrama (1822) and, six years later, both in a burletta and a romantic drama starring Ellen Tree, who was painted in her role of Haidee in a picture at the Royal Academy the same year.

In the selection of both dramatic and nondramatic Byronic subjects for art can be seen most of the elements that made the contemporary response a paradigm of Romantic sensibility, ranging from Oriental melodrama to erotic sentiment. The action typically occurred in the same glamorous locales—the Alps, Greece, Italy, and above all the Middle East—to which the Romantic imagination, particularly as expressed in nonliterary painting, was constantly returning. The moody, rebellious Byronic protagonist, the archetype of the Romantic hero, was captured in paint: “Everlasting protest, impetuous energy of will, melancholy and despondent reaction,” wrote John Morley, looking back at the fashion from the vantage point of 1870. “Cain and Conrad; then Manfred and Lara and Harold.” Most buyers of pictures probably thought less about the political or philosophic implications of Byron’s heroes than about the sheer glorious adventurousness they represented, along with their passionate relationships with beautiful women, who shared the billing.

The public evidently did not mind that diversity was not a distinctive quality of most of the painted representations of Byron’s heroes and heroines. Macaulay’s complaint serves as a miniature catalogue of Byronic art, distilling the essence of innumerable stylized tableaux and poses:

All his characters,—Harold looking back on the western sky, from which his country and the sun are receding together,—the Giaour, standing apart in the gloom of the side-aisle, and casting a haggard scowl from under his long hood at the crucifix and the censer,—Conrad, leaning on his sword by the watch-tower,—Lara, smiling on the dancers,—Alp, gazing steadily on the fatal cloud as it passes before the moon,—Manfred, wandering among the precipices of Berne,—Azzo, on the judgment-seat,—Ugo, at the bar,—Lambrus, frowning on the siesta of his daughter and Juan,—Cain, presenting his unacceptable offering,—are all essentially the same. The varieties are varieties merely of age, situation, and costume.

“His women, like his men,” Macaulay continued, “are all of one breed.”

Haidee is a half-savage and girlish Julia; Julia is a civilized and matronly Haidee. Leila is a wedded Zuleika—Zuleika a virgin Leila. Gulnare and Medora appear to have been intentionally opposed to each other. Yet the difference is a difference of situation only... It is hardly too much to say, that Lord Byron could exhibit only one man and only one woman,—a man proud, moody, cynical,—with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart; a scorn of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection;—a woman all softness and gentleness, loving to caress and to be caressed, but capable of being transformed by love into a tigress.

If one may judge from titles and such few canvases and (more) engravings as survive, this deadening monotony of treatment was most evident in pictures from the series of Oriental tales that began with The Bride of Abydos and The Giaour in 1813 and continued with The Corsair and its sequel Lara (both 1814). The Bride of Abydos inspired a dozen or so paint-
nings, nearly all of which were portraits of Zuleika, the bride. Among them was William Allan’s version (pl. 329). There was an equal number of pictures from The Giaour, all but one predating 1847; from the catalogue entries, it is impossible to pinpoint which episodes were chosen.

Of this early group of poems, the overwhelming favorite among artists was The Corsair. Pictures were painted from it the very year it was published, and, from then to the 1880s, some sixty “corsair” paintings made their appearance; this was one Byronic subject whose appeal lasted beyond mid-century. Corsairs (pirates) were a popular subject in Romantic painting, apart from the Byronic association, and on the stage as well. There had been a play called The Corsair as early as 1801, and the publication of Byron’s poem stimulated a corsair tradition in the theater that ran parallel to the one in the art gallery. In addition to corsairs pure and simple there was The Corsair’s Son; or, The Fall of Otranto (1821), the title of which doubtless resulted from someone’s notion that if an allusion to

329. William Allan, The Bride of Abydos (dated 1836) (Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum). An instance of the way artists drew from Byron’s exotic poems subjects that would appeal to the current taste for Oriental genre. Allan was especially well qualified to do so because he had traveled extensively in Asia Minor early in the century.
Byron's poem could be relied on to lure playgoers, a tacked-on allusion to Walpole's Gothic novel would bring in twice as many. There were also a Corsair's Bride (1821), The Corsair, with music from Herold's Zampa (1836), and The Corsair's Revenge (three different productions in 1835–40). On the stage, the Byronic link was usually in name only; in art, painters made more explicit reference to the poem by naming their characters Conrad, Gulnare, and Medora, and by portraying situations found there—Medora awaiting Conrad's return, Gulnare's love for the Corsair being discovered by the Seyd, the parting of Conrad and Medora. Many of the paintings were simply of Medora herself.

Don Juan shares with The Corsair the distinction of being Byron's most-painted poem. Some fifty pictures from it are recorded, half of them from 1830 to 1850. Despite the poem's great length and kaleidoscopic variety, very few episodes were selected for treatment, decidedly the most popular being the love idyll of Don Juan and Haidee. Juan shipwrecked, Juan succored by Haidee (pl. 133), Juan separated from Haidee by her father and seized by pirates, were painted time after time, as was Haidee alone, the idealized Greek beauty (pl. 57). The only other recurring subject from the poem was Donna Julia, who turned up periodically between the 1830s and the 1860s.

From Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, the other long poem of Byron still read today, some fifteen paintings are recorded, all but three before 1850; these included the canvases by Wilkie and Turner mentioned above. No single theme predominated. The varied subjects included The Maniac Visited by His Children, Harold at the Tomb of Cecilia Metella (both canto 4), and, belatedly in 1868, Henry O'Neil's The Night Before Waterloo (canto 3).

Of Byron's shorter poems, the most painted was "The Prisoner of Chillon," the first three pictorial versions of which, surprisingly, did not appear until 1837, twenty-one years after the poem was published. Part of the theme's attraction was doubtless the opportunity it offered to emulate Reynolds's famous painting, from Dante, of Ugolino in the Tower. Ford Madox Brown's (pl. 97) is the most important surviving treatment of the poem.

Brown's earlier picture from Byron, Manfred on the Jungfrau (pl. 330), was one of the two notable paintings taken from that poem, the other being Martin's dramatic portrayal (pl. 331) of the Faustian hero preparing to plunge from the Jungfrau into the illimitable lake below. The scenes chosen by the half-dozen other painters of subjects from the poem were Manfred and the chamois hunter, and Manfred and the Witch of the Alps. Presumably these were the subjects of the panels that Richard Dadd painted for Lord Foley's house in Grosvenor Square in 1841.

How many of the dozen nineteenth-century English paintings of the Mazeppa story were directly derived from Byron's treatment (1819) is open to question. The tale, of a nobleman who discovers his page Mazeppa to be his wife's lover and ties him to a wild horse for a night ride through a forest alive with packs of wolves, originated in Poland at the end of the seventeenth century; and a hundred years later, at least two portraits of the hero were painted on the Continent. The first English Mazeppa paintings (1822) undoubtedly came from Byron, but those produced after 1824 may have had multiple sources, coming as they did in the wake not only of his poem but of Géricault's lithograph (1823), a play at the Royal Coburg theater in the same year, Horace Vernet's several
well-known paintings, and the stage adaptation made in 1831 for the celebrated equestrian-showman Andrew Ducrow, which became one of the most frequently performed of all nineteenth-century plays. The most notable surviving Mazeppa paintings by an English artist are John Frederick Herring's pair (1833), explicitly labeled as being “after Horace Vernet,” and, like Vernet’s, concentrating on the horses in one scene (pl. 93) and on the wolves in the other.

MOORE

Thomas Moore’s career in English art in some ways resembled Byron’s. The subjects of their poems enabled painters to exploit two extremely popular veins of Regency art, the sentimental female portrait and Oriental figures and scenes, a form of exotic genre. The poetry of both men was widely circulated in illustrated editions and volumes of “beauties” at the same time that paintings from the poems appeared in the galleries. Their popularity among painters and their clients reached its peak simultaneously in the 1840s and 1850s, when their critical reputations had sharply declined. And though many scores of canvases bore subjects from Byron and Moore (the latter was represented by about seventy, as against Byron’s two hundred), few were by the period’s most accomplished or popular artists.* Probably for that reason, not many reviewers bothered to describe the pictures they looked at. As with Byron, remarkably few pictures from Moore, in proportion to the number produced, survive today, because they were of a kind particularly vulnerable to shifting popular taste, the first to be sent to jumble sales or sold to secondhand dealers for their frames when a household was cleared or redecorated in a newer fashion. But engravings and such descriptions as were printed suggest to the reluctant imagination what the paintings must have been like.

*Lalla Rookh (1817) was the most painted of Moore’s poems. Artists valued it more highly than did most reviewers, and for a good reason: the


*But more artists of stature contemplated subjects from Moore than actually painted them. Moore himself recorded in his journal on 4 June 1819 that he visited an exhibition of John Martin’s pictures, including “Joshua bidding the sun stand still—one of the most magnificently conceived things I ever saw—poetry of the highest kind,” and was told (by Martin himself?) that “he means to paint a subject from Lalla Rookh” (The Journal of Thomas Moore, ed. Wilfred S. Dowden [Newark, Del., 1983], 1: 182).
very qualities the critics deplored, above all the lush, cloying imagery, were those that the painters delighted in. Between its first appearance at the Royal Academy in 1819 and mid-century, it was represented by some thirty canvases, and fifteen more were painted in the next fifty years. The subjects were drawn from all four of the stories told by the young minstrel Feramorz as the wedding party of Lalla Rookh, daughter of an Indian mogul, moves from Delhi to Kashmir, where the princess is to marry the young king of Bukhara. Pictured most frequently was Nourmahal, the wife of the emperor Selim in the fourth tale (“The Light of the Haram”); she was seen as often as Byron’s Haidee, posed in colorful costume against a background of Oriental ornaments and furniture. Of these many Lalla Rookh paintings, the only one of which substantial record survives—the picture itself is known only from a pencil study—was Daniel Maclise’s melodramatic Mokanna Revealing His Features to Zelica, the climax of the first tale (“The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan”). After causing a sensation when it was first shown in Liverpool in 1832, it was brought to London and shown the following year at the British Institution.

Moore’s other popular work, *Irish Melodies*, was published in 1807, with successive enlarged editions to 1834; that of 1824 contained six designs by Stothard. In the exhibitions, the collection was represented chiefly by pictures of Nora Creina, the subject of the song “Lesbia Hath a Beaming Eye”. The popularity of this particular subject after mid-century was due to the wide circulation, in engraved form, of W. P. Frith’s painting of Nora Creina (pl. 52), commissioned for an album of *The Beauties of Moore* (1846) to which Augustus Egg, Alfred Elmore, and E. M. Ward also contributed. Maclise’s *The Origin of the Harp* (pi. 332), from *Irish Melodies*, is one of the few other identifiable paintings from Moore to survive.

**SHELLEY**

Shelley was not represented in exhibition catalogues during his lifetime, and when his poems eventually made their way there, it was oftener as sources of mottoes than as subjects of illustrations. The first paintings to be associated with him seem to have been two that were exhibited fully twenty years after his death. At the British Institution in 1842, two artists, Theodor von Holst and Thomas F. Marshall, showed pictures with identical titles and mottoes: *The Bride*, quoting Shelley’s line “Ginevra from the nuptial altar went,” in the poem describing a tragic story quite different from the one in which Samuel Rogers’s heroine of the same name figures.

Artists probably entertained the same attitude toward Shelley that his early critics did. One serious charge against him, compounded by his radical religious and political views, was his notoriously “immoral” character. Thanks to the great popularity of Byron’s poetry, critics and artists alike managed to overlook similar failings in his case, but they were unable to do so in Shelley’s. Reviewers, moreover, were too busy flaying him on personal grounds to say much about his artistry; and when they did, they merely used words like “imagery” without elaboration. Such small discussion of his imagery as did appear emphasized its indistinctness, the very opposite of the clear definition that normally recommended a poem to painters’ attention. In 1821, for example, a writer in the *London Magazine* said: “He gives us for representations of things, rhapsodies of words. He does not lend the colours of imagination and the ornaments of styles to the objects of nature, but paints gaudy, flimsy, allegorical pictures on gauze, on the cobwebs of his own brain. . . . ”

**332. Daniel Maclise, The Origin of the Harp (RA 1842) (City Art Gallery, Manchester).** “A bold attempt to embody in painting Moore’s poetical idea of a female metamorphosed into the instrumental symbol of Green Erin, her hair falling over to form ‘the golden strings’” (Literary Gazette, 7 May).
The result was that most of the twenty or so paintings from Shelley came in the latter half of the century, when his infamy as a revolutionary thinker and violator of the marriage vows was slowly being replaced by celebrity as a poet. Only a handful of his poems figure in the list, and none more than three or four times. There were four paintings from *The Cenci*, the first of which (RA 1850) was greeted by the *Literary Gazette* as “a revolting subject, and quite unfit for art or exhibition.” But the subject was established in art long before Shelley took it up, in the celebrated painting of Beatrice Cenci, then attributed to Guido Reni, which the poet described in his preface to the play. In Shelley’s mind as he conceived the character was Eliza O’Neill, the Regency actress who posed for a number of portraits; but although it is likely enough that the several artists who painted Shelley’s Cenci were influenced by “Guido’s” picture, none was old enough to have been affected by similar reminiscences of O’Neill.

Although, as Hugh Honour has recently suggested, Turner’s late *Queen Mab’s Cave* (B1 1846) may be “directly related” to Shelley’s *Queen Mab*, the connection rests in the attitudes and symbolism the painter and poet shared rather than in any overt allusion to the text of the poem. The painting was exhibited with a supposed quotation from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, “Frisk it, frisk it, by the Moonlight beam” (the line does not occur there) and another from Turner’s own shadowy *Fallacies of Hope*: “Thy Orgies, Mab, are manifold.” There was no reference to Shelley in the catalogue entry. The two recorded paintings explicitly alluding to *Queen Mab* were typical mid-Victorian sentimental pictures of sleeping women named, for the occasion, Ianthe.

Not until 1936 was it discovered that an early work by John Martin, *Sadak in Search of the Waters of Oblivion* (pl. 36), illustrated at second hand a hitherto unidentified poem by Shelley. The painting was exhibited in 1812 at the Royal Academy. Unsold there, it was subsequently bought at half price from the hard-up artist by a governor of the Bank of England. Its subject was typical Oriental claptrap—the story, taken from James Ridley’s *Tales of the Genii* (1764), of Sadak, a Persian nobleman who was tricked by the Sultan, the abductor of his wife, to go on a quest for the Waters of Oblivion, with a sample of which the Sultan secretly planned to brainwash Sadak’s wife. An engraving of the painting appeared in the *Keepsake* for 1828 in conjunction with an unsigned poem, “Sadak the Wanderer,” which the index to the surviving manuscripts of contributions to that edition identified as Shelley’s. Although Shelley may have seen Martin’s picture, it is more likely that his source, like Martin’s, was Ridley’s tale.

**Keats**

It has been said of Keats that he was “the most insistently pictorialist of any Romantic poet and one of the finest flowerings in any soil of the centuries-old and European-wide tradition of the Sister Arts.” He so steeped his imagination in graphic and plastic imagery from works of art he had seen as to require a whole book (Ian Jack’s *Keats and the Mirror of Art*) to describe its effect on his poetry. More than any other major English poet, in the few years allotted to him he was a familiar figure in art circles and counted Haydon among his close friends. Perhaps this was why, although as yet he had few readers, his poems were represented in art exhibitions so quickly after his death in February 1821. In May of that year, Thomas Stothard showed at the Royal Academy a painting called
William Holman Hunt, The Flight of Madeline and Porphyro during the Drunkenness Attending the Revelry (RA 1848) (Guildhall Art Gallery, London). A pre-Pre-Raphaelite canvas: it was on the occasion of its display at the Academy that Hunt and Rossetti first met. Within a few months, they became close friends, and, attracting several like-minded young artists (who shared, among other enthusiasms, a love of Keats’s poetry), formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

The Vintage, with a quotation from the “Ode to a Nightingale.” (Stothard seems not to have acted on a hint, offered in a review of “Isabella, or the Pot of Basil” in the Edinburgh Magazine the preceding year, that he make a “beautiful picture” from the stanza in that poem beginning “And as he to the court-yard pass’d along.”) In 1828, a picture by another well-known artist of the day, William Hilton, bore the title “Amphitrite, Queen of Pearls” from the third book of Endymion.

During his lifetime, criticism of Keats was so polemic, controversial, and personal that the pictorial qualities of his poetry were not often mentioned. One conspicuous exception was P.G. Patmore’s review of Endymion in the London Magazine (1820) in which, anticipating the similar device Leigh Hunt, a close friend of Keats, would later apply to Spenser’s verbal pictures, a garland of “beauties” from Keats was interspersed with art analogies: “The little cabinet gems which follow may take their place in any collection. The first might have been cut out of a picture by Salvator. . . . The next we can fancy to have formed part of one of Claude’s delicious skies. . . . The third reminds us of a sublime picture of The Deluge, by Poussin. . . . The fourth picture has all the voluptuous beauty of Titian.”

In the quarter-century following his death, only three small editions of Keats’s poems (1840, and two in 1841) were called for. His fame was kept modestly alive by surviving friends and critics like Hunt, who wrote of “The Eve of St. Agnes” in 1835, “Could all the pomp and graces of aristocracy, with Titian’s and Raphael’s aid to boot, go beyond the rich religion of this picture, with its ‘twilight saints,’ and its ‘scutcheons ‘blushing with the blood of queens’?” Nor was Keats wholly forgotten in the exhibitions. As early as 1832–33, treatments of the classical myth of Endymion—no newcomer to British art, bent as it was upon imitating the Renaissance masters; even Mulready had tried his hand at the subject in 1808, when Keats was only thirteen years old—were exhibited with quotations from the poem. Similarly, beginning with the version Joseph
Severn, Keats’s best friend in his last illness, showed at the Royal Academy in 1840, treatments of the story of Isabella and the pot of basil were customarily associated with Keats’s poem rather than the Boccaccian original. (G. F. Watts had another Isabella in the same show, but this bore a motto from Boccaccio rather than Keats.) The next year, Richard Dadd showed at the British Institution his early fairy painting, *Ever Let the Fancy Roam*, from “To Fancy.” And the year after that (1842) C. H. Lear showed at the Royal Academy *Porphyria Discovered in the Hall of Madeline*, from “The Eve of St. Agnes.”

But the turning point of Keats’s fortunes in the world of art came when Dante Gabriel Rossetti assembled the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, who shared, among other sympathies, an admiration of Keats’s poetry. (William Bell Scott, an associate member, probably had been the first to discover Keats. In 1832, he had written an undergraduate poem in his memory.) The appearance of Holman Hunt’s *The Flight of Madeline and Porphyro* (pl. 333) at the Royal Academy in 1848—significantly, the year that saw the publication of Richard Monckton Milnes’s biography of the poet, which laid the foundation for his wider fame—occasioned the first meeting of Rossetti and Hunt, who had discovered Keats’s poetry by way of a secondhand copy he bought for sixpence. At the exhibition, Rossetti went up to Hunt, “loudly declaring,” Hunt recalled, “that my picture . . . was the best in the collection. Probably the fact that the subject was taken from Keats made him the more unrestrained, for I think no one had ever before painted any subject from this still little-known poet.”

Hunt was wrong, of course, as we have just seen.

The three Keats poems that were most often illustrated were *Endymion*, “Isabella,” and “The Eve of St. Agnes,” from each of which some twenty pictures are recorded. All three occurred in the Pre-Raphaelites’ oeuvres: Millais’s *Isabella*, also known as *Lorenzo and Isabella* (pl. 334), which was at the center of the Pre-Raphaelite furor when it broke in 1849; Arthur

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> Fair Isabel, poor simple Isabel!  
> Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love’s eye!  
> They could not in the self-same mansion dwell  
> Without some stir of heart, some malady;  
> They could not sit at meals but feel how well  
> It soothed each to be the other by.

Isabella’s wealthy brothers cannot abide the obvious romantic attachment between her and Lorenzo, their business associate, seen here offering her half of a blood-red orange. The displeasure of one of the brothers is expressed by kicking her dog. Eventually they will murder Lorenzo and plant his head in the pot of basil half-hidden at the end of the table.
335. Arthur Hughes, *The Eve of St. Agnes* (RA 1856) (Tate Gallery, London). “The half-entranced, half-startled, face of the awakening Madeline is exquisite; but the lover’s in both the centre and right-hand subjects very far from satisfactory. If, however, the reader knows the poem, he will be grateful for the picture” (Ruskin, *Academy Notes*, Works, 14: 70).

Hughes’s *The Eve of St. Agnes* (pl. 335); Millais’s *The Eve of St. Agnes* (RA 1863), “the best abused picture of the season,” according to the *Art Journal*; Hunt’s *Isabella and the Pot of Basil* (1868); and Hughes’s *Endymion* (RA 1870).

After a comparative lull in the late sixties and the seventies, artists’ interest in Keats revived, thanks in part to Moxon’s sumptuous edition of the poems with six engravings from paintings by Edward Poynter. Between then and the end of the century, there were half a dozen new *Isabellas*; and “La Belle Dame Sans Merci,” previously represented not at all, received some ten treatments. The most notable of these were Arthur Hughes’s (Cosmopolitan Club 1863) and John William Waterhouse’s (RA 1893)—a symptom of the increasing “Aesthetic” interest in the mysterious and baleful effect of the *femme fatale*.

HOOD

A popular humorist, editor, and poet in his day, Thomas Hood was represented in art mainly through at least fifteen paintings of work-worn seamstresses inspired by his “Song of the Shirt” (see Part One, above, chapter 5). But his other famous poem lamenting man’s inhumanity to woman, “The Bridge of Sighs,” was the subject of half a dozen paintings, and his ballad “The Dream of Eugene Aram,” a favorite repertory number for platform and parlor elocutionists, was responsible for four more (1852–82). Bulwer-Lytton’s novel on the same true murder story also was represented in a number of paintings. Altogether, some thirty recorded pictures came from Hood.