

Illustrated Interviews.

XXVI.—MR. HAMO THORNYCROFT, R.A.



IT requires but little apology for once again resorting to the immediate neighbourhood of West Kensington. There is no thoroughfare in London more inviting to those in search of all that is interesting, all that is instructive, than the Melbury Road. To think of standing in a garden and being able to throw stones—carefully, of course—on to the green lawns of Sir Frederick Leighton, Mr. Val Prinsep, R.A., Mr. Watts, R.A., Mr. Marcus Stone, R.A., and Mr. Colin Hunter, A.R.A., whilst, from the roof of this particular house, those gifted in aiming straight might pitch a pebble amongst the bushes belonging to Mr. Burgess, R.A., and Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A. I have before now referred to the love which the birds appear to have for this delightful neighbourhood. If there were any mystery at all as to why our feathered friends have singled out this spot, I have discovered the true solution. Hamo Thornycroft cares for them. He fed them on the summer morning I met him, and he will remember their wants in the days of winter. He knows them, and believes they know him, the result of giving them proper food and not only the stray bits, which sometimes make it convenient to be kind. Even "Corky," the cat, who is snoozing under the mulberry tree which its owner planted seventeen years ago, would not harm a feather of one of them.

And that is something to say for "Corky," for it is on record that she has leaped over Mr. Watts's wall and made for Marcus Stone's larder, and annexed a partridge, to say nothing of helping herself to Val Prinsep's pigeons!

The love which Hamo Thornycroft has for all things which Nature has given us was a gift to him on his very first birthday. This love tells with a man, and has moulded his ruling characteristics to what they are to-day. I have seldom met a man freer from what may be plainly written down as egotism than the eminent sculptor. Rapid success is frequently fraught with that which spoils those on whom it falls. But not so here. Of medium height, strong, and well set, with fair, curly hair, and eyes that almost speak, he impresses one as a man who does not stay his kindness at the birds. He speaks very quietly and very quickly, and believes in hard work. He is always in his studio, at half-past eight, and has, before now, held on to his mallet until two the next morning. A man who puts in eighty hours a week—as he has done just before the Academy—is not afraid of work. But, then, his heart is in every block of marble he touches. His work, too, in the Academy Schools is by no means small, for it falls to the lot of Royal Academicians to devote two hours every evening for two months of the year to the Academy students. He finds recreation in divers ways. He



From a Photo. by)

MR. THORNYCROFT.

[Elliott & Fry.]

is an expert amateur photographer; he rows and cycles. Together with his wife he has practically made a grand tour of England, Scotland, and Wales; whilst as a grouse shot he is thoroughly skilful.

"You shake hands like a sculptor," he said when I met him.

"Why?" I asked.

"You grip. If a man carves it tends to strengthen the gripping muscles both in holding the chisel and hammer. I used to do a good deal of carving in my early days—a very essential thing for the sculptor, because it accustoms you to the possibilities of your material. Foley had a great grip when shaking hands. He had a hand of extraordinary size, and it is all the more remarkable when you remember how wonderfully complete his work always was, as witness his magnificent equestrian statue of Sir James Outram for India. I always quote that when committees try to hurry me with my work. Foley took seven years to complete it.

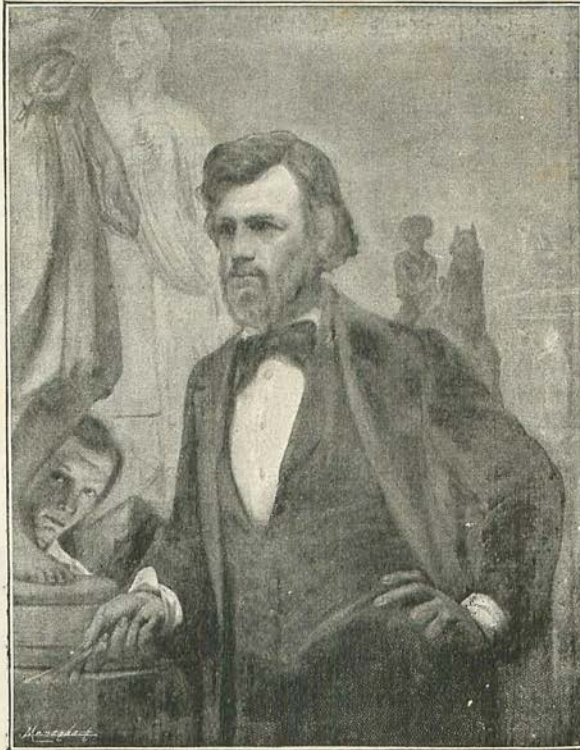
"Foley, by-the-by, was a very bad shot. He was a great friend of my father's, and I will remember one day they were out shooting, when a very easy bird rose. Foley fired and—missed. He missed again—and at last the old pointer turned round, looked up at him with a positive look of disgust, and walked away. The very next bird that rose the dog had it and practically killed it with anger.

"Boehm had a nervous, delicate hand. My mother's hand, too, is very beautiful. Now, shall we walk through?"

The house proper—unmistakably nineteenth century in its design, which was architected by John Belcher from plans by its owner—contains numberless tokens of the

skill of the Thornycrofts as an artistic family both in the way of pictures and sculpture. The dining-room looks on to the Melbury Road. Here in a corner is the first bust executed by the Royal Academician. It is of his sister. Portraits of his grandfather, John Francis Thornycroft, and of

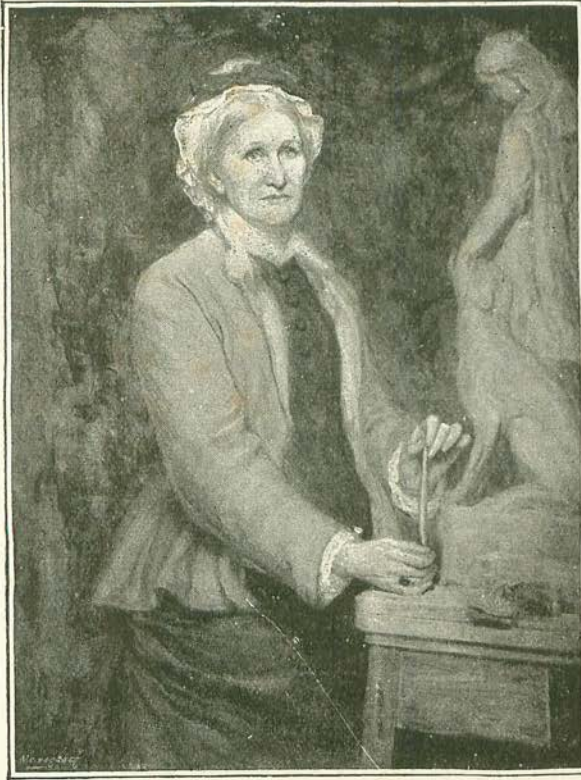
his maternal grandmother are on either side of a canvas by John Cross of his father and eldest brother John, who is happily known as "Torpedo Thornycroft," owing to the success which has crowned his skill as a maker of torpedo boats. Mr. Thornycroft's father was an excellent engineer, and towards the end of his days practically forsook sculpture and spent most of his time with his son at his torpedo works at Chiswick. It is interesting to note that the skill of father and son was put into the



From the Painting] MR. THORNYCROFT'S FATHER. [by John Cross.

building of the first launch that actually kept up with the Varsity crews. The *Nautilus* was forty feet long, and was built in Mr. Thornycroft senior's studio in 1860.

A picture by T. B. Wirgman of the sculptor's mother hangs over the fire-place. She is painted in the act of modelling the Princess Louise (Duchess of Fife) as a child, with her pet dog Rover by her side. Here, too, is a clever drawing of his paternal grandmother—a North Country woman, a great Puritan, and never tired of dilating upon the wickedness of sculpture, as it tended to be Popish! A couple of drawings by Alfred Stevens—for whom their possessor has an intense admiration—are pointed out as being the work of a remarkable man whose drawings approached Raphael nearer than all his fellows. A Michael Angelo is also here, together with some striking photos of works



From the Painting] MR. THORNYCROFT'S MOTHER. [by T. B. Wirgman.

by Saint Gaudens, the great American sculptor, the only reminiscence of these particular subjects which were destroyed by fire at New York. The first sketch for "The Mower" is on the mantel-piece.

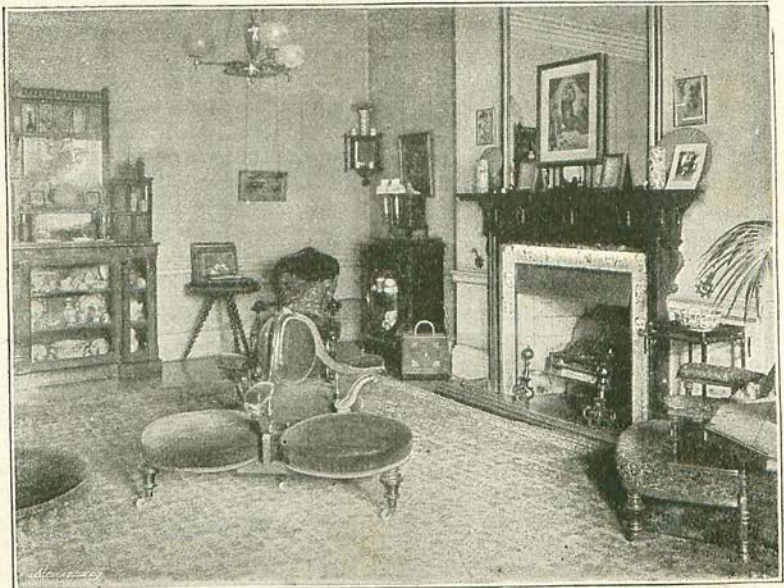
The hall is given up to many pictures by Miss Helen Thornycroft, a very brilliant painter of flowers in general and orchids in particular. A reminder of Mr. Thornycroft's old Volunteering days in the shape of a drawing by Wirgman is looked at: the Artists' Corps, indeed, for amongst the crowd may be singled out

Sir Frederick Leighton, Oules, Forbes Robertson, Cotman, Val Prinsep, A. S. Coke, Stacy Marks, Brock, P. R. Morris, Hamo Thornycroft, and many more—the sight of which reminds Mr. Thornycroft that he and Sir Frederick had the biggest heads in the corps, and there was always a great difficulty in getting the regulation helmets to fit.

Every picture on the walls, every work of art scattered about in the drawing-room, has its own peculiar interest, but one is naturally drawn towards the family hearth. It is a remarkable hearth. Each tile bears the features of a member of the family. This is the handiwork of Miss Helen Thornycroft.

"That water-colour," said Mr. Thornycroft, "is by G. D. Leslie, and is somewhat interesting. We were up the Thames in my brother's launch one day, and a number of us started out into the country, to return in two hours with a sketch. Leslie's was voted the best, and he was good enough to give it to me. Leslie used to frequent the Thames very much for painting, and I remember seeing him rescue one of his pictures

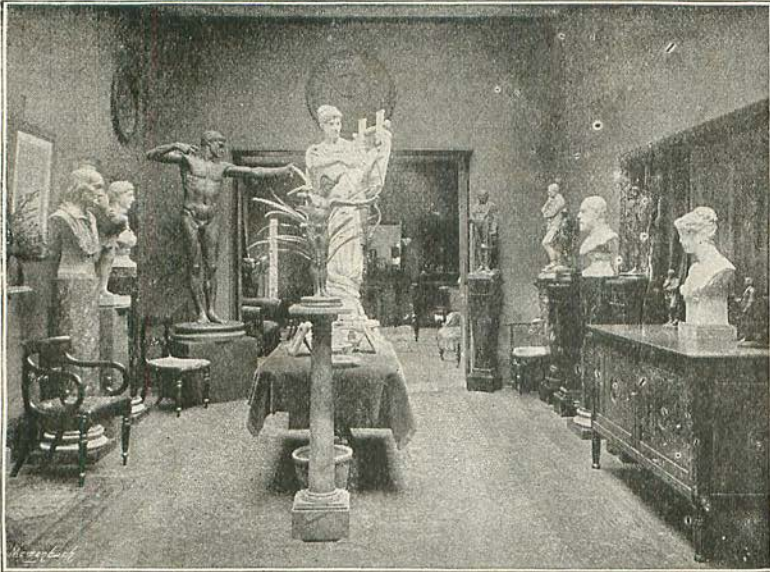
from going under a mill at great risk to himself. His jokes were as great as they were artistic."



From a Photo. by]

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

[Elliott & Fry.



From a Photo. by

THE GALLERY.

[Elliott & Fry.]

Then came the story of the murder on the Thames.

A lady used to pose to Leslie up the river. It seems that the moths ruined her dress, and Leslie suggested she should get into the water with her dress on, and, with the help of the boat-hook, have a good scour, with the view of getting rid of the dress-destroyers. The lady offered no objection. In she went. Some passers-by seeing the incident were alarmed, and shouted "Murder," and as the artist persisted in keeping the lady down with the boat-hook, some of the more practical onlookers rushed for a policeman. The constable arrived and shouted, but Leslie only hit her the more. A boat was rowed out; one man took off his coat and prepared to swim, but when the constable rescued from the water a lay-figure, Leslie most politely thanked him for his ready help, and the representative of the majesty of the law nearly fainted!

We entered the gallery.

This is a grand space given up to models of works executed either in marble or bronze, with one or two examples in marble complete. In a corner stands "Artemis," and opposite is "Lot's Wife," impressively still and cold. "The Teucer" looks dignified, and "A Warrior Carrying a Wounded Youth" is treasured, for it won its modeller the gold medal in his student days. "April," "Sir Arthur Cotton," "The Mower," "The Sower," "John Bright," "General Gordon," "Medea," "Putting the Stone," and the

late Professor Owen are all here.

We stood before each one, and each suggested its story. "Artemis," said the sculptor, "was a fortunate statue for me. I had a most excellent model, an Italian girl whose grace was perfect, one of the best models I have ever had. She was not as romantic, though, as the being she posed for, for she married an itinerant vendor of ice-cream. You notice the hound. I was at my wits' end.

where to get the dog I wanted. Early one morning my sister was out, when she saw a wiry-haired greyhound being chased by boys. She took it under her protection and brought it home. That is the dog in the statue. I kept it, and curiously enough it died the very day the statue was completed. It lies buried in the garden. 'Lot's Wife' was, I think, the first large statue exhibited in the Royal Academy. This is the original. It was suggested to me by seeing a huge straight boulder standing alone and weird on a sea-shore early one morning. 'The Teucer' was modelled from three men. The figure proper was from an Italian, the arms were from a man in the studio, and the head is that of a gipsy I found. The Italian looked a shambling fellow with his clothes on, but, when undressed—well, I have seldom seen a finer physique."

The "Warrior and Youth" brought back pleasant recollections. It reminded its creator of his early student days—the little supper party which always comes with the award of the gold medal—the students' meal originally inaugurated by Flaxman one night in expectation of his winning the much-coveted award. He didn't get it, but he gave the supper just the same! And Mr. Thornycroft remembered how he could not get on his legs to make the customary speech, and how Henry Stacy Marks—an old student—helped him out of his dilemma, and spoke out with all his heart on his behalf.



From a Photo. by

THE INNER GALLERY.

[Elliott & Fry.]

What a grand sitter Professor Owen was!

"I got my impression of him," continued the sculptor, as we looked on the almost smiling face, "by seeing him sitting on the vertebrae of a whale, which was made into a garden seat, on the borders of Richmond Park. It was so natural. I remember telling him one day about the birds in my garden, and he said:—

"England is richer in birds than in any other branch of natural history."

"So intense was his love for animals that he had his bed almost as high as the ceiling, and had to mount a small pair of steps in order to reach it. I asked him the reason for this.

"Oh, it is very simple!" he replied. "I have had it built so that I can look out on to Richmond Park and see the deer in the early dawn. They behave so differently at four o'clock in the morning, when no one is near to disturb them."

"Yes, that is 'The Mower.' It was the first work of the more realistic school I attempted after so much of the classical. It was suggested by a very simple incident. I was on the Thames, and on the bank I saw a man just like the statue looking at everything passing along the river. I made the sketch at once, and this is the result."

The gallery is continued in a second apartment—this further room is also given up to many examples of his mother's skilful workmanship, intermixed with pictures by the family. There are also engravings of many of the Presidents

of the Academy. A portrait of the late Vicar Cole hangs just by a fine view of the Forth Bridge, and I listened to a strange little incident, of which perhaps those superstitiously inclined will make much. It has been Mr. Thornycroft's lot to dine lately at tables where thirteen have sat down. The last occasion was at Sir Frederick Leighton's. Vicar Cole was present. He unceremoniously rose from

the table, crossed to his host, and whispered something in his ear. Shortly after he died!

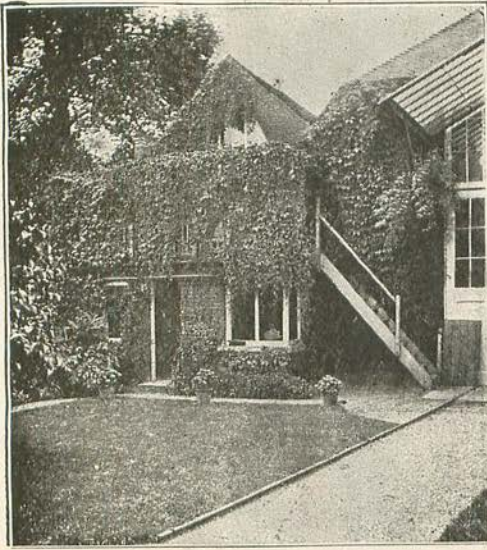
From amongst the plaster models in the corner, one quaint and curious object stands out. It is under a glass case and made of jet. Carefully and almost reverently the sculptor lifts it down. He looked at it and then at me, as though waiting.

"It is a model of Nelson's funeral car in the crypt of St. Paul's!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he said, "and the beginning of our family as sculptors. My grandfather went to see Nelson's funeral. The wonderful car impressed him. As soon as he returned to Norfolk he went along the sea-shore, picked up the jet, and carved this. Mr. Vernon saw it, and immediately sent him to Chantrey's studio."

We left the gallery, walking down a glass-enclosed passage brimming over with flowers, and just looked into the garden to see how the mulberries were ripening and whether the pears were making good progress. A rose tree was blooming over the grave of Artemis's dog. We could just get a glimpse of the roof of Sir Frederick Leighton's wonderful Arabian Hall. "Corky" was sitting on the wall and positively blinking at Mr. Marcus Stone, who was just then walking in his garden. Marcus Stone is passionately fond of cats, and is jealous of "Corky"! "Corky," however, prefers to appropriate his partridges.

Here is the great turn-table on which the statues are placed, in order that their creator may "consider" them under various atmo-



GARDEN ENTRANCE TO STUDIO.
From a Photo. by Mr. Thornycroft.

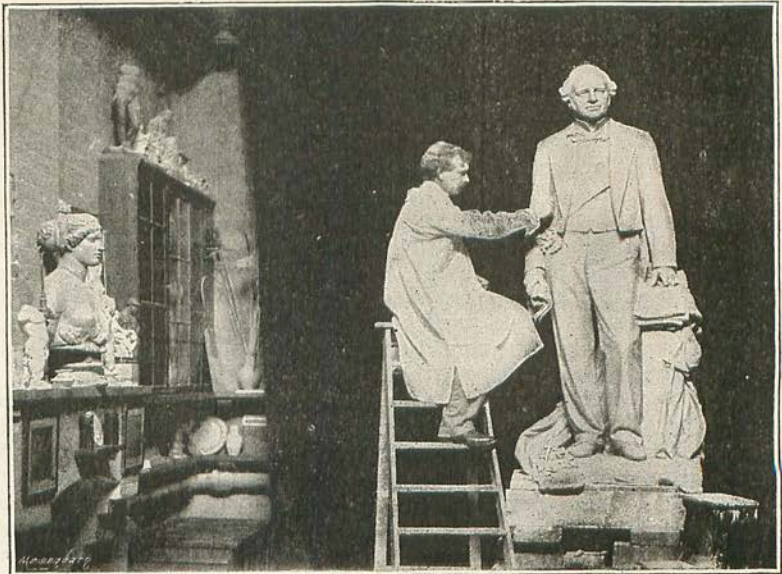
spheric conditions. It is worked by means of hydraulics, and can be raised fourteen feet. It runs in and out of the studio on metal lines. Then we enter the studio—the workshop of the man who has done much to popularize sculpture whilst retaining all the pure beauty of which the art is typical. There are really three or four studios.

The first of these is a private studio. The horse-shoe over the door silently testifies "Good Luck." The centre is just now occupied by a colossal statue of the late Lord Granville intended for the House of Commons. It is now in the clay. By its side, on a smaller turn-table, is the tiny sketch model—about twelve inches high—in green wax, and the quarter-size model in plaster of the finished work. Both of these are made by the sculptor, from which his pupils and assistants build up the statue in clay to its full size. Again the master-hand is

employed, and from this it is either copied into marble or cast in bronze.

There is much about this studio to examine. The mantel-shelf provides a resting place for what might be called the sculptor's treasures. Here in the centre is the Oxford Fragment, a bust probably of Demeter of about 500 B.C., the marble of which was found in a cellar—thrown aside as useless—by Watts and Ruskin, at Oxford. But its breast heaves to all who love art, and it can only be placed second to the Venus of Milo. There are many more fragments of Greek art here, and a sketch model by Alfred Stevens of one of the figures on the Wellington monument in St. Paul's, a work considered by Mr. Thornycroft to be one of the finest in Europe. Sketch models for all the sculptor's principal works are scattered about—works by his grandfather, father, and mother are by no means absent. The old red flag which surmounts a very dusty-looking helmet is no relic of war's alarms. The helmet is that worn by its owner when a Volunteer, and the flag once decorated his father's yacht.

In an adjoining studio—the carving studio—a pupil is working upon a fine statue which is to be placed in the inner court of the Royal Exchange. The model for this is considered a "find," for the girl who is posing for it possesses a face singularly like Her Majesty's at the time of the coronation. The association between pigeons' wings and those of angels is very, very distant, but those lying on a slab played a useful part in



From a Photo. by

MR. THORNYCROFT AT WORK.

[Elliott & Fry.]

realizing the wings of two angels which form part of a very elaborate monument just completed. A recumbent figure of the late Bishop Goodwin of Carlisle is just now in process of being modelled, and another of Dr. Thompson, the late Archbishop of York. On a ledge rest a score of photos of Bishop Goodwin, but the sculptor was unable to obtain one which conveyed any useful idea as to what the hands were like. The cast of hands in a prayerful attitude which is shown to me are those of Miss Goodwin, whose own hands resemble those of her reverend father in a remarkable way. The

the hat particularly, as it is an excellent guide to the size of a man's head.

An amusing though creepy little story is told. A few days ago the model for the late Bishop was lying clothed in the episcopal robes. It was growing dusk. A new assistant, whilst walking through, was surprised to see the model raise his head and ask what time it was. The man ran for his life.

"Are monuments as popular to-day as ever?" I asked.

"Yes," Mr. Thornycroft said; "I think so. I find that many people are anxious to have a monument erected at once, but the



From a Photo. by]

THE STUDIO.

[Elliott & Fry.

little angels which surround the head of the slumbering Bishop were modelled from Mr. Thornycroft's own children.

The model who has been "sitting" for Dr. Thompson has only just left. He is 5ft. 11in.; Dr. Thompson was 6ft. 2in.; but the sculptor will easily make the difference of three inches in his modelling. A strange, weird feeling comes over one as you note beside the Bishop's figure his familiar gown with lawn sleeves, his boots, his hat, even his collar. But the sculptor is provided with every item of clothing when it is possible—

wish often dies away. Woolner one day had a weeping widow come to him to make a monument of her husband. Woolner agreed, and set to work. The design was made and approved. Soon after she came and said she thought *this* decorative figure might be left out; later on she desired *that* figure omitted, and at last she suggested that the whole thing might be postponed for the present. She was married again! But she paid the bill readily enough when it was sent in."

Hundreds of plaster casts crowd this studio. The sculptor frankly admits to an occasional



From a Photo. by]

THE STUDIO.

[Elliott & Fry.

smashing of them—that is, a wilful breaking up. In the outer yard a workman is chipping away at a small frieze, and in close proximity others are busily engaged on a colossal statue of Sir Steuart Bailey, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. This work is subscribed for by the natives of India themselves as a tribute to the Governor. This part of the place is very workmanlike. Great blocks of marble are resting against the wall. One fine and pure piece is pointed out as weighing six tons. It cost £200. Granville is inside! A workman is sawing away at a huge piece of the product of Carrara. You may watch him for an hour, but he seems to have done but little. He can only cut some eight inches a day.

Chip, chip, chip! goes the carver's hammer, and the chips that fall from the block are brushed into a corner, for the purveyor of aerated waters will fetch them away. How curious to think that the tiny pieces of marble which will eventually fall from the head of such a one as Lord Granville, and are now being freely scattered about the floor, will eventually become converted into the gas of soda-water! Yet such is the case.

The hammers, points, drills—of all sizes—

and claws which produce the same effect as the Grecians obtained two thousand years ago lie in a state of utter *olla podrida* about the stone floor. And the chip, chip, chip! was still in our ears as we walked towards the garden once more and sat down beneath the shade of the mulberry tree.

The pursuit of that art of which Mr. Thornycroft is so capable a representative led to the meeting of his father and mother. His mother—a wonderfully delicate manipulator of chisel and hammer—was a pupil at his grandfather's studio. Mr. Thornycroft's father came from Cheshire to the studio, and met the lady who was to be the mother of the Royal Academician. They married. So it came about that William Hamo Thornycroft was born at 39, Stanhope Street, London, in 1850. He still possesses a vivid recollection of his grandfather, John Francis Thornycroft, though he was a mere child when he died; and before referring to his past career, his thoughts freely travel towards his mother, whose figure of "The Skipping Girl" was considered by the Danish sculptor, Professor Jerichau, to be one of the six best modern statues in Europe. After paying this affectionate tribute to his mother, Mr. Thornycroft said:—



"THE TEUCER."

"There were seven of us. I was considered the one too many, so I was sent off to an uncle, who was a farmer in Cheshire, at the age of four. You see, I was bred almost in the open, and from this I believe my intense love for natural history sprang. The fields and meadows were my playground, and in the woods and along the hedgerows I think I found all my small heart needed to satisfy it. I rode, fished, and shot. Then, at eight years of age, I went to a village school, where I remained for two years. I rejoice in those days. We used to lock up the master until he promised to give us a holiday. He would cut out at us with the birch when he was free, but one day a stalwart young farmer championed our cause, and when the pedagogue saw him roll up his sleeves he flew!

"At ten years of age I went to the Grammar School at Macclesfield, riding backwards and forwards every day. I certainly did learn a little drawing, but my faculty, so to speak, in this direction lay in map-drawing, in which I always secured first place in my class."

Young Thornycroft remained there for two years. He came to London and caught the first glimpse of his father's studio. At twelve

years of age—and by this time he had quite decided in his own youthful mind that he would not become a farmer—he was sent to University College School—a school which can claim the present President of the Royal Academy himself as one of its old boys. He remained there five years. He was a playground boy, revelling in cricket and fives, and he unquestionably became extremely popular—the outset of which was that in a lads' game popularly known as "Taking Prisoner," the coming sculptor distinguished himself in the estimation of his schoolfellows by holding on to the biggest youth in the school until he was captured.

One night the young 'Varsity College lad was walking along the Caledonian Road. His dream was almost a definite one. He knew his father had practically decided that he should be an engineer, but he in his



"MEDEA."

own mind was leaning towards art. He stopped in front of a second-hand bookstall, which abounded in this thoroughfare in those days, and the first volume he picked up was a Homer, with illustrations by Flaxman. He bought it—three shillings and sixpence was the price. This book undoubtedly worked wonders with the lad. He almost picked the pictures to pieces, and one might say it was the purchase of this old volume that gave birth to the love of art which was in after years to materially assist in making the man famous.

“I surreptitiously made some drawings,” said Mr. Thornycroft. “I went to the British Museum and drew for a time—principally Greek statuary. I was fascinated by the wonderful work of those ancient Greeks. I worked and worked, and then the thought occurred to me, ‘Why should I not try for a studentship at the Royal Academy?’ Accordingly I appropriated a corner of my father’s studio, and commenced work upon a small model for an antique statue.

My father winked at it, but his silence told me I was doing well. My mother never ceased to encourage me. The work finished—it was a dancing faun—I with fear and trembling carried it down to Burlington House. The look of the hall-porter nearly crushed me, but he condescended to take my statue, and—well, a week or two afterwards, on the recommendation of Foley that I was a moral young man—I was admitted to the school as a probationer. Then I started in earnest with a

view to getting a seven years’ studentship. True, my first training was at the British Museum, which I consider the very best for a young man. It contains the finest work in the world, more especially Greek work; and I leaned in that direction from the first—but I owe very much to the Academy Schools. I got the seven years’ studentship, during which time I took the highest awards for sculpture. I got a medal for drawing.”

This winning of the medal for drawing

was quite an unusual thing for a sculptor. Here Mr. Thornycroft had many fellow students who have since become famous, principally Alfred Dicksee, R.A., who took the gold medal for painting the same year. Painter and sculptor have always run close together. Dicksee was made A.R.A. the same year as Mr. Thornycroft, and R.A. very near the same time—only the sculptor is married and the painter remains a bachelor. They were hard-working days of studentship, though there was always time for a little inward chuckle at the expense of old



From a) THE GORDON MEMORIAL AT MELBOURNE. (Photograph.)

Charles Landseer, then the keeper of the Academy. He was very deaf, and so was his brother Tom, and when these two worthy brothers of Sir Edwin met, their efforts to catch one another’s words was mirth-provoking in the extreme.

“In 1871 I went to Rome,” the sculptor continued. “An aunt died and left me a little legacy, so, accompanied by two sisters, I visited Italy. I was deeply impressed, particularly by the Renaissance work, and the Michael Angelos at Florence. I visited

Venice too, and the Venetian painters, particularly Tintoretto, influenced me much. I travelled altogether for seven weeks, but I was called back by a message from my father. I think he must have recognised my work, for he told me that he wanted me to assist him in the carrying out of a commission for the Poets' Fountain in Park Lane. I modelled the figure of Clio at the base, and also that of Fame which surmounts the whole."

And "Fame" was a good omen. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy. Again he assisted his father in a fine statue of Lord Mayo for India. The public were not slow in recognising the genius of the young man, and Millais came forward and patted him on the back. Already Woolner had said an encouraging word. The very first commission he had was for a bust of Professor Sharpey, and Woolner gave him good cheer over this. In 1873 a medallion was refused by the Royal Academy—a work, by-the-by, now hanging in a house in Scotland—but the sculptor was by no means discouraged. It paid him to wait, for it made him work with truer determination, and in 1875 the gold medal was secured, the little supper-party held, and Stacy Marks's friendship cemented. The future now seemed secure.

"I gradually took the lead in my father's studio," he said, "working in the old house in Wilton Place, formerly occupied by Westmacott. My father became very much wrapped up in engineering, and soon forsook the place altogether for my brother's torpedo works at Chiswick. I was now engaged on quite a number of portrait busts, etc., but I was longing to go farther. Just as the young architect always starts by drawing the plans for a cathedral, so did I want to do some-

thing equally big. My father gave up the studio, so a friend and I designed these, and in 1877 I came here. I started on 'Lot's Wife.' I followed this up by 'Artemis.' I have already told you what a grand model I had for it, though indeed the face was purely ideal. I had my notion—as I believe everybody else has—as to what Artemis

would be like if she came to earth. Waterhouse, the architect, brought the Duke of Westminster to see it. He must have liked it for he immediately gave me a commission to carry it out in marble. It is now at Eaton Hall. It was the real beginning of my success, for on that I was elected an Associate of the Academy in 1881.

"The idea then came to me that a successful statue might be created from the employment of two simple lines practically at right angles. My first impression was to utilize an archer, but eventually I selected the Greek hero famous as an archer in the 'Iliad.' This was 'The Teucer,' and was carried out in bronze. This brought me great happiness, for it was bought under the Chantrey bequest, and is now in South Kensington. I think it was only the third piece of sculpture bought under this bequest, the other two being Sir Frederick

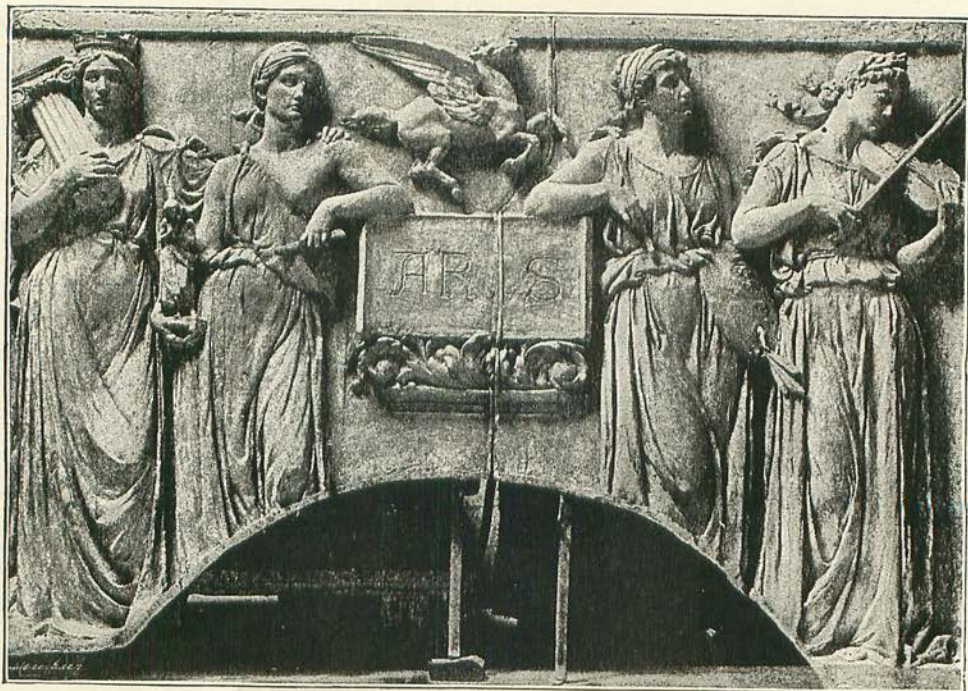
Leighton's 'Athlete and Python' and Calder Marshall's 'Prodigal Son.' Yes, I was very delighted, for it meant that my own work had found pleasure in my fellow sculptors' eyes. I also did 'The Mower' in bronze and 'The Sower.' Then the 'Medea.'

"This last is illustrative of William Morris's 'Life and Death of Jason.' It was a commission from a man who died just after I had finished it in plaster—as it is now—and I shall not complete it unless somebody wants it."

Then came a remarkable change in the



JOHN BRIGHT.



PORTION OF FRIEZE FOR THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS.

character of his work—the classical was left for a time, and the realistic, the modern, taken up. He had been to France, and was struck with the direction in which art was tending. It was becoming more modernized, more typical of the day in which we live as representing the history of the period of our own existence, instead of speculating on that of the ancients. So he started and completed his first great public statue—a commission from the Government—General Gordon, which now stands in Trafalgar Square, and a replica of which is in Melbourne.

“I have reasons to believe that the work was given to me at the instigation of Sir Frederick Leighton and Sir John Millais, and I was engaged on it for two and a half years. The model I employed was an Englishman. I read up as many lives of Gordon as I could, being particularly impressed with his career in China. I never saw him, but he grew in my mind the hero he undoubtedly was.

“I remember hearing an Italian officer say: ‘No country in the world could produce a man like Gordon save England.’ So I conceived the man—of wonderful strength of mind, love, kindness, affection—all these, and such I endeavoured to suggest in my figure. The Bible in his hand is exactly like the one he used—now in possession of the Queen. I was very much helped by

photographs, particularly by a full-length one taken in China; but I was anxious to obtain some personal description, and it was over this that I had the two widest opinions as to a man’s appearance I have ever heard.

“I asked Sir Henry Gordon for some information on this point.

“‘My brother,’ he said, ‘was a fine, soldierly fellow; stalwart, well set up and erect like this,’ and Sir Henry pulled himself up.

“I went further and asked a fellow officer of Gordon’s.

“‘Oh!’ he assured me, ‘rather humped-back, like this,’ and he too illustrated his meaning. The divergence was so great that I fell back upon the photos. The small quotation on the pedestal, ‘Right fears no might,’ is my own. As you know, the Trafalgar Square pedestal has two panels—‘Fortitude and Faith,’ and ‘Charity and Justice.’ The replica, which was commissioned by the Australians—who sent a contingent up the Nile to relieve him—has four panels, including the death scene at Khartoum, which I modelled from first-hand descriptions. I also did John Bright for Rochdale.”

Mr. Thornycroft has done many other remarkably fine works of a modern character, in addition to those already referred

to in the early pages of this article—Sir Arthur Cotton, Professor Erichsen, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (now in Westminster Abbey), Thomas Gray (at Pembroke College, Cambridge), Henry Bradshaw, Dr. Harvey, an equestrian statue of Lord Mayo for Calcutta, etc. He was elected a member of the Royal Academy in 1888, his diploma work being "The Mirror." Amongst his latter-day work the friezes which decorate the exterior of the Institute of Chartered Accountants might be singled out as being amongst the finest examples of their kind in the country.

We returned to the house. In passing through the studio we noticed a woman and child standing, as though waiting. The woman's olive complexion and glorious black eyes told of her nationality. As for the little one's eyes—they were alight as they wandered in wonderment round the great place. Italy was their home.

"Excuse me for a moment," said Mr. Thornycroft.

He spoke to the mother and little one. The woman smiled and seemed glad.

"Models," the sculptor said to me. "There is a village near Naples where it is a tradition amongst the inhabitants to come to England and become models. So 'models' run in the family, from one generation to another. So they come here, and settle for the most part either in Hatton Garden or West Kensington. They are unquestionably the best models. They have an extraordinary habit of knowing how to sit still. I have had them remain in the same strained position for two hours at a time. Yet I would not say one word against your English model.

"One of my best 'pointers' sat to me as a boy years ago. Your English model is only just beginning to wake up to the fact that they can only be models for a time, and recently I have met with cases where they are making a decided effort to be proficient in something else beside 'sitting.' I had a girl here the other day who is learning the type-writer, and another is already very skilful at book-keeping, and balances a certain butcher's books every Monday evening after work in the studio is over."

We talked together of many things at lunch. He considers Flaxman and Stevens two of the greatest sculptors this country has ever seen, and does not hesitate to recognise the French sculptors as the most gifted in Europe, and the Italians the most "frivolous."

He believes that the future of sculpture in this country is assured. In the streets of London the statues of great men are necessary: the public ask for them and expect to see them erected. Yet, he thinks that in small bronze works the future of sculpture lies. Our climate was never made for marble any more than marble was made for this climate. Bronze is the thing. His realistic work has by no means killed his love of the Greek school. He has sketches for a number of antiques, which he hopes at some future time to carry out, but he regards it as an advantage to a man to be able to change the character of his work, otherwise the public would get



"ARTEMIS."

bored with it, for their demand is for variety. As a proof of his present leaning towards the Greek, if he had to live, so to speak, with one of his own statues, he would immediately choose—"Artemis."

HARRY HOW.