

"THE EMPEROR THEOPHILUS CHOOSING HIS WIFE" (1891).

An incident from Gibbon. All the most beautiful maidens assembled in a row, down which the Emperor walked, and presented a golden apple to the one approved.

Illustrated Interviews.

No. LI.—MR. VAL C. PRINSEP, R.A.

BY FRAMLEY STEELCROFT.



IN stature, a burly giant of nearly six feet three; in worldly wealth, rich; in reputation, a painter of distinction. Mr. Val Prinsep is one of the most conspicuous figures in contemporary artistic and literary circles—to say nothing of *le monde ou l'on s'amuse*. It was at Eastbourne that I first met him, and in order to communicate to me a few anecdotes and funny stories out of his opulent memory, he had to raise his voice above the terrific "swish" of the storm-lashed sea without.

The Prinsep family is intimately associated with India. Young Valentine was born in Calcutta in 1838, his father (who had been a member of the Indian Council) returning to England when the boy was five years old. After living for some time in Hyde Park Gardens, Mr. Prinsep senior migrated to Little Holland House, a sweet, old-world, red-tiled manor-house, long since demolished; it had four acres of garden.

From this time onwards the home of the Prinseps became the resort of art and literature as typified by such men as Tennyson, Thackeray, Tom Taylor, "Dicky" Doyle, Millais, Leighton, Holman Hunt, Rossetti, William Morris, Browning,

Watts, Burne-Jones, and a host of others. No wonder, then, that young Prinsep early evinced a love of art, and a distaste for the Indian Civil Service, for which he studied at Haileybury and was originally intended.

At this time his father was growing old, and, doubtless, reasoned within himself that it would be a good thing to have at least one son at home. Said he, "Well, if you really *want* to be an artist, I'll

give you so much a year for ten years"; and the thing was done.

Watts, who was very intimate with the family, was the lad's first master. Later came the usual sojournings abroad, on which account are artists the envy of the less-favoured professions. "When I was twenty-one," said Mr. Prinsep, "I went over to Paris to study drawing under Gleyre." Poynter, Du Maurier, and the inimitable Whistler had just left the *atelier* of the same master.

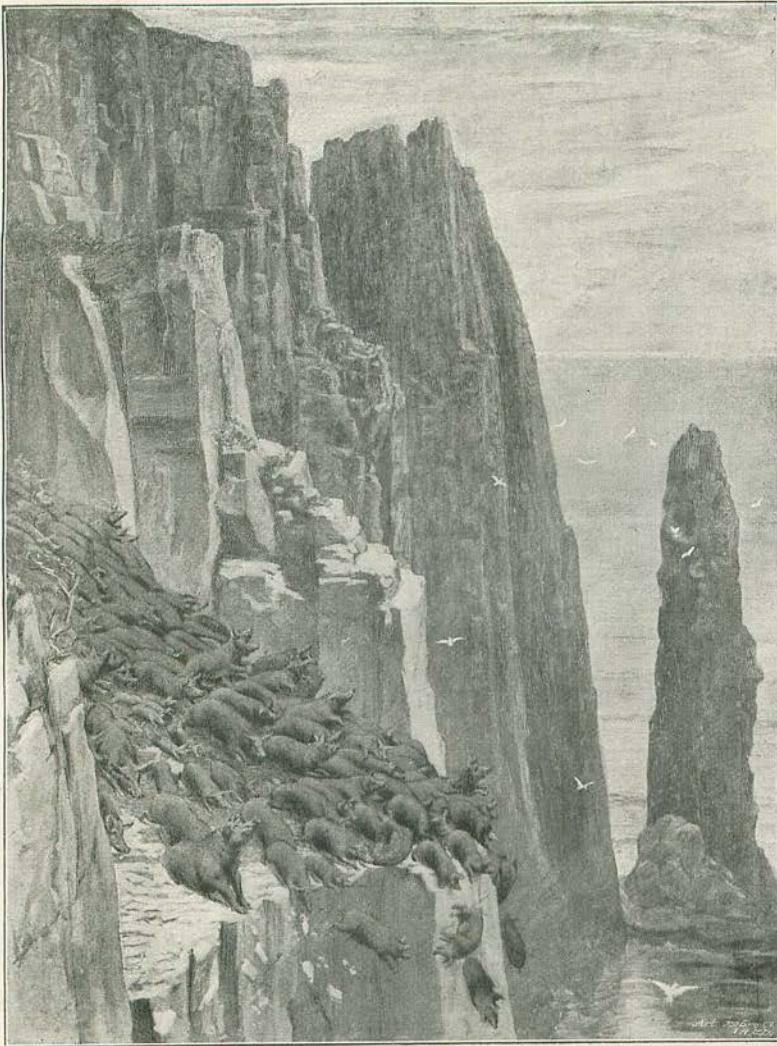
One of the earliest events in young Prinsep's career was his visit to Budrum, the ancient Helicarnassus, where he stayed six months. He and his master, Watts, got attached, through Lord Lansdowne's

influence, to Sir Charles Newton's expedition, which was sent in H.M.S. *Gorgon* to Asia Minor to discover the site of the mausoleum which was one of the Seven



MR. VAL C. PRINSEP, R.A.

The beautiful picture on which Mr. Prinsep is engaged is called "Summer Fading Away at the First Touch of Winter." The chair in the background is a Chinese one, scarlet in colour, presented to the painter by Rossetti (who had several) at the time when Mr. Prinsep was painting "Chinese" Gordon at Chatham.



"THE GADARENE SWINE" (1874).

"... And, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters."—Matt. viii., 32.

Wonders of the World. "This expedition had a strong influence on my artistic ideas"; but it didn't exercise a restraining influence on his exuberant spirits. He jumped over walls, and climbed over houses. Now, the dignified Turks in those parts thought the whole expedition mad enough, but the young artist they viewed with special admiration—for him they named "Tolos," meaning "the hailstorm." Why, at Budrum, he once took a donkey by the scruff of its neck and pitched it into the water, just to see if it could swim!

Rossetti, whom Mr. Prinsep met at the age of nineteen, was the man who influenced him most. The great pre-Raphaelite

came one day to Little Holland House, and said to his *protégé*, "Come down and paint a thing at Oxford." When I explained that "I couldn't paint," "That makes no difference," he said, "you'll learn." The facts were these: The Union Hall at Oxford was built by Woodward, a friend of Rossetti, and therefore the decorations were intrusted to the latter. To William Morris was intrusted the painting of the ceiling, and a nice mess he made of—himself. What with paint on hands, clothes, and face, you wouldn't have known him for a "human." An Oxford don came through one morning, adjusted his glasses deliberately, and looked up at Morris.

"Could you tell me, my man: what are the sub-

jects of the frescoes derived from?"

Morris glared down (he presented an awful spectacle), and roared out: "'Mort d'Arthur.'"

The don was sorry he spoke; he went away, feeling hurt and insulted, and forthwith wrote a letter of complaint to Rossetti about the rudeness of his "workman."

"My own painting," remarked Mr. Prinsep, "was 17ft. long; the subject was 'Sir Pelleas and the Lady of the Lake.' There were ten altogether. Burne-Jones painted one also. We all finished our work to the best of our ability, which was not great; but Rossetti left his, 'The Dream of Lancelot,' unfinished.

Mr. Prinsep recalls no end of stories about this merry Oxford business, which lasted several months. At this time poor Morris indulged the hobby of manufacturing armour. He was giving a party at his rooms one evening, when a consignment of tilting helmets was brought by the blacksmith he employed. "Please, sir," piped the servant, as she threw open the door, "*the man's brought your pots!*"

"Rossetti, Morris, and myself were once

the coat. There he stood in his old plum-coloured painting jacket!

"At the various dinners we gave," pursued Mr. Prinsep, "Rossetti — always a great admirer of Morris — used to call upon him to recite one of his 'grinds' — poems, that is. Times beyond number did Morris respond, sitting curled up in his chair, whirling his watch-chain with one hand and gesticulating with the other, whilst his admirer punctuated the recitation with embarrassing demonstrations.



"HOME FROM GLEANING" (1875).

invited to dine at Christ Church, but it was found that Morris's wardrobe was deficient, at which Rossetti was very wroth. He borrowed a dress-suit that was made for a thin man, whereas he was stout. The master looked him up and down, and then wrathfully told him to look in the glass. Morris did, and saw that a huge streak of paint adorned one side of his face; decidedly matter out of place. At last we set out, but the moment Rossetti threw off his overcoat at our destination, we roared with laughter; the tables were turned. Rossetti, the great stickler for propriety, had put on a dress trousers and vest right enough, but clean forgot all about

"Rossetti himself, though, had a way of making quaint little rhymes at the expense of his friends. He criticised as puerile the decorations executed by Mr. Burgess, R.A., and would burst forth as follows:—

There is a poor fellow named Burgess,
Who from childhood never emerges.
Unless you were told he's disgracefully old,
You might offer bulls'-eyes to Burgess.

Burne-Jones, William Morris, and all his friends likewise came under the lash."

Rossetti was one of Mr. Prinsep's most intimate friends. He loved his London, and would roam the streets at four o'clock in the morning. "He and I were one morning

walking through Seven Dials, when a rough-looking fellow was suddenly noticed walking level with us. I stopped and asked our friend if he wanted to fight. 'No,' was the reply, 'you're too big for me; but I'll take on the little 'un'—meaning Rossetti. After a moment's pause, the man continued, 'An' I dessay *you* cud be accommodated rahnd the corner.' 'For God's sake, let us get out of this,' muttered Rossetti, hurriedly."

Mr. Prinsep was something of an athlete

pronouncement that was far from being true, however.

After returning from Paris, Mr. Prinsep took a studio in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, and there settled down to work. Here he painted his first picture—"The Queen was in the Parlour, Eating Bread and Honey"—which was exhibited in 1860, at the Hogarth Gallery. Mr. Frank D. Millet now owns that picture. About this time, too, he went to Italy with Sir Edward (then



"THE LINEN-GATHERERS" (1876).
Painted by Mr. Prinsep from some Cornish women.

in those days. "I used to go boxing at Reade's, in Half Moon Street," he told me. "On one occasion Rossetti and I went to a pugilistic benefit at the Rotunda, in Blackfriars Road. Presently a nigger came on to spar. After the first round, the combatants retired to their respective corners for the usual treatment. The nigger leant back to be fanned, and cast up his big eyes.

"'Look at him,' said Rossetti, merrily; 'Uncle Tom aspiring to Heaven.'" And the whole house rose at the remark.

But Rossetti had always some dictum ready to fire forth. Speaking of Millais, he once declared, "He never likes his own pictures, and hates everybody else's"—a

Mr.) Burne-Jones. "We called on Browning at Siena," he said to me, "for we had a letter of introduction to him from Rossetti. We came upon his villa about dusk, and I remember he was just seeing off into their carriage William Story, the American sculptor, and his wife. While we were waiting for him, Landor came into the hall and accosted us with a remark about the glorious sunset."

Mr. Prinsep's adventures and incidents in the Italian cities would fill a vastly amusing book. There were the evenings in Rome, at a little *osteria*, kept by one Gigi, when the extraordinary game of "Pasatella" was in hilarious progress on Saturdays. Pasatella, by the way, may be briefly described as a

Bacchanalian gambling game. At this *osteria* Browning, Story, and many others were entertained by Mr. Prinsep and his friend Brandon, a French artist long resident in Rome.

"At Gigi's," remarked Mr. Prinsep, "we used to have music, varied occasionally with poetic duels. One poet would reel out a line, for which his opponent would have to find a rhyme, and this rhyme, if lame and bad, was promptly hooted by the company. Browning was often present, and he was always a highly diverted spectator.

"One glorious night after dinner we thought we would have an *affresco* moonlight concert in the Colosseum. We put the band in one van and followed in another. The quiet citizens heard the uproar as we drove past, and muttered in their mellifluous tongue, 'Hark! Someone has won the Lotto'"—a public gambling game.

In 1861 we find Mr. Prinsep back again in England, and soon after this he painted his first Academy picture, "*Bianca Capello*," getting his subject from an incident in Florentine history. In '55, by the way, Leighton came to the Prinseps' house with an introduction to Watts, and virtually from that date until his death the great President continued to be the most intimate friend of the subject of this interview.

In 1864 Mr. Prinsep commenced building his present superb residence, 1, Holland Park Road, but was in Venice most of the time. Whilst in that matchless city he painted the "*Festa di Lido*," a picture 10ft. long, and one with a history.

"I had it in my house for several years," remarked Mr. Prinsep to me, "when one day a man named Green called, and wanted to buy some of my pictures. He bought the '*Festa di Lido*.' Years after, I had a letter from a gentleman, asking if I would touch up for him a picture of mine which he had in his possession; he said it was called '*Venetian Songbirds*.' I didn't remember a picture of that name, but I asked to see it. It turned out to be part of the '*Festa di Lido*,' whose enterprising purchaser had cut it into three parts and sold these separately, thereby making a jolly good thing. Later on a dealer asked me to do something to a baby's face in a picture belonging to *him*. He said it was sold to him as being my work. It was, being yet another section of my big Venetian picture."

I expressed surprise at this. "Oh, that's nothing," replied Mr. Prinsep, cheerily. "Watts got first prize for drawing at the

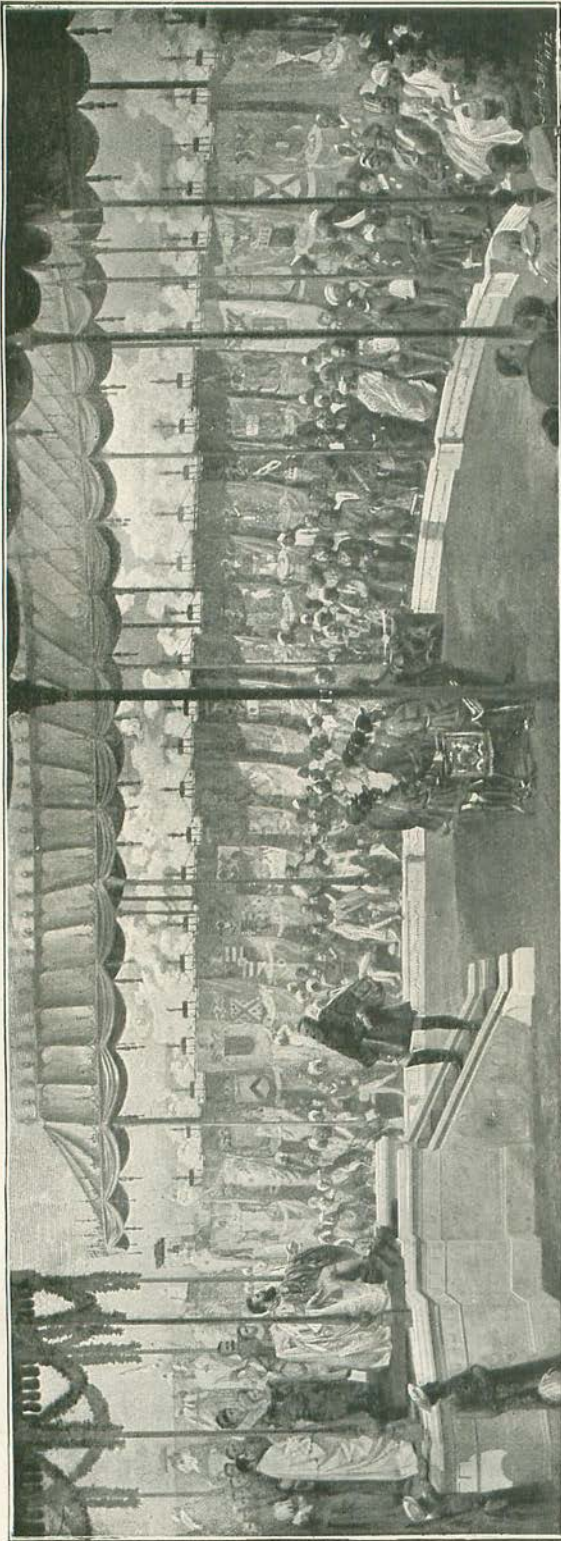
Westminster Hall competition in '47. His cartoon was sold to an enterprising lithographer, who had the drawing cut up and the parts lithographed and sold wholesale to schools as copies."

We now come to one of the most important episodes in Mr. Prinsep's career. In 1876 he was officially approached, and asked if he would paint a great historical picture, which was to be presented to the Queen-Empress by the Rajahs of India. He accepted the commission on the terms of £5,000 and a passage out. A bonus of £600 was afterwards added, but the picture never paid the artist; it involved three years of incredibly hard work.

Mr. Prinsep landed at Bombay about Christmas, 1876, arriving at Delhi just as the camp was being formed. He went here and there with the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, and remained at Delhi about a month.

The great picture measures 27ft. by 13ft., and contains 150 portraits; wherefore had native princes of various sorts and temperaments to be visited and painted at their own remote residences. The powers that were seemed to think the whole thing a surprisingly simple matter—just a few sketches, taken during the great Durbar itself, and then a quiet time in the studio.

Now, about the necessary individual sittings. "I was to have painted Scindia first, but he begged to be excused, so Holkar was my first victim. He got tired of sitting and yawned, whereupon all the Court standing round snapped their fingers to keep the devil from jumping down His Highness's throat." Mr. Prinsep soon grew accustomed to Indian ways. When he got into this same Maharajah's presence, he dashed forward to help a clumsy servant to unpack the requisite impedimenta, but was restrained by the British Resident, who pointed out that the most microscopic approach to "manual labour" was considered low and degrading. The artist took and profited by the hint. "Afterwards," he tells me, "I grew so great a personage, that if a spot of paint got on to my finger-tip, I would lean back languidly while an attendant wiped it off." Holkar on one occasion grew especially impatient, and manifested it in unmistakable fashion. Said Mr. Prinsep, earnestly: "If the great God took five-and-twenty years to make you as beautiful as you are (Holkar was over fifty), how can you expect me to paint you in as many minutes?" Which masterly and diplomatic "poser" immediately restored the prince's equanimity.



“THE IMPERIAL ASSEMBLAGE AT DELHI” (1880).
Presented to the Queen by the Rajahs of India. The Viceroy, Lord Lytton, proclaiming the Queen as Empress of India before the native rulers.

Apparently the native rulers of India were bursting with loyalty at this time.

“One venerable gentleman—Nabha—had a man grinding ‘God Save the Queen’ on a hand-organ as we entered his tent. Jheend had a band of bagpipes, and gave us ‘God Bless the Prince of Wales.’ His pipers were sooty black, but wore pink leggings, in order that they might in some slight degree resemble the Highland originals.”

Some of the rajahs were not exactly complaisant, and others very difficult of access. Occasionally, Mr. Prinsep couldn’t wait to complete a sketch, so he would take away with him the prince’s uniform—in many cases a very costly dress indeed. One native potentate—Scindia—flatly refused to part with his coat. Mr. Prinsep then took aside the rajah’s son, and threatened that if the garment were not forthcoming he would be compelled to complete the painting of the costume from that worn by his own cook! After the next sitting, as the artist was leaving the palace, the Maharajah’s son came running after him with the much-desired coat and pugaree.

They are *sui generis*, these rajahs. One, the Rajah of Bhoondi, would not eat in a room in which a European had been, and he always indulged in a wash after shaking hands with one. The wives of another were never visible, no, not even to a doctor when they lay dying. The doctor was told *he must feel the pulse of one of the servant women*, and prescribe for the Ranees thereafter! Again, Jeswant Sing, of Rutlam, the head of the Rajpoots of Malwa, had an enormous and most elaborate pugaree, which he said was invented by his grandfather, and took him two hours to tie. “No more idea of time than a sitting hen,” commented Mr. Prinsep, sadly, on one Rajah’s unpunctuality.

Mr. Prinsep never passed such a trying year. It was all trying—mainly to get his material together. He confesses to have composed doggerel verses at the request of

the *Cuarun*, or Court Bard, at Oodeypore—anything for conciliation. He witnessed elephant and buffalo fights, was thrown from his pony in the Liddar Valley over a wooden bridge and into a swift stream, and waited five weeks in Kashmir for three sittings from the rajah and his son. Yet, in spite of various trials and troubles, he had an eye for humour. He noticed at Benares that the oars of the *high-class* boats consisted of bits of board nailed on to broom handles; which leaves us wondering what the low-class craft were like; and his grocer at Simla had a large sign over the door, "LICENSED TO SELL WONDERS."

Mr. Prinsep relates the following incident

bearer, stayed with me three months," etc.—while the servants themselves had gone off contentedly with the baggage labels—"Mrs. —, passenger to Umballa"!

"My host at Khundwa," said Mr. Prinsep, as he reached himself another cigar, "told one or two curious tales of the jungle around. This one, which I remember, is original: A telegram was received at Khundwa station from somewhere down the line, 'Tiger dancing on platform. Pointsman run away. Line not clear. What for do?' The tiger was shot next day, proving the truth of the message sent by the local Baboo station-master."

Now and then, one of the native princes



"DEATH OF SIWARD THE STRONG" (1882).

An incident from Freeman's "History of the Norman Conquest." Siward, Earl of Northumberland, was a great warrior, and, feeling death upon him, he caused his armour to be put on, and was, by his own request, removed out of doors to die.

which happened to a lady friend of his on leaving Simla. During her stay in the hills, she had engaged several servants, and on leaving wished to dismiss them. All, of course, demanded *chittis* or written characters, which were cheerfully given. What was the lady's astonishment on arriving at the booking office (whither she had sent her belongings the previous day) to find that her luggage had been refused as "insufficiently labelled." As a fact, the labels were the servants' characters—"Gundha, an excellent

Vol. xii.—77.

would manifest some real interest in the great projected picture. Thus: "Tukaji Rao Holkar requested me to paint him fat, as he was at the Assemblage (he had been ill), and not as he was at the moment of being sketched." He rather prided himself on his bulk, did Tukaji, of whom it was said that he could eat a whole wild boar at a sitting.

Well, we must get on. The next stage is a command from the Queen, which necessitated the conveyance to Windsor of

all the sketches for the great picture. These went in a van—forty kit-kats and more than as many smaller sketches. They were ranged all round against chairs and things in the White Drawing-room, overflowing into the adjoining Green Drawing-room. Mr. Prinsep himself acted as *cicerone*, and his interview with Her Majesty lasted nearly an hour.

At length, three years after the acceptance of the commission, the "Imperial Assemblage at Delhi" was an accomplished fact—or, rather, picture. It was painted in three sections of 9ft. each, and blotted out everything else in Mr. Prinsep's splendidly spacious studio. The oak frame cost £300, and weighed two or three tons. The artist painted

every Saturday, the recipients being poor, deserving old women, and the scene, the Chapter House of the Cathedral. Mr. Prinsep having resolved to portray this interesting ceremony, got together all the old ladies and induced them to give him sittings in a local auctioneer's room. Truth to tell, they were almost as troublesome as the rajahs. One of them, old Mrs. Savage, was one day accosted by the canon, who asked her who she was. The reply was voluble and startling: "Savage I am by name and savage by nature. I don't need to ask who *you* are—I know you by your cross face. You're Canon —"; which was surely enough to crush even a canon.



"THE SATURDAY DOLE" (1882)—"FOR THE BREAD OF THE NEEDY IS THEIR LIFE."
Aged women receiving a dole of bread in the Chapter House of Worcester Cathedral.

another picture each year he was engaged on the big painting, just to keep up the tradition of the Academy.

In due time, Mr. Prinsep exhibited "The Imperial Assemblage" in the Academy Exhibition of 1880. He had been made an A.R.A. the previous year. Soon afterwards the huge canvas was dispatched to Buckingham Palace, where it may now be seen in the Princess's Corridor; the mere removal from Burlington House cost £25.

But this is not by any means the only one of Mr. Prinsep's pictures which has a history. Take, for example, "The Saturday Dole." It seems that an old charity in Worcester provides for the distribution of a lot of bread

Another vain old thing of ninety odd complained bitterly to the painter: "You're all wrong, that's what you are. *My eyes is be-lue.*" As a fact, her face could scarcely ever be seen, solely because her form was bent double.

The "Gadarene Swine" is yet another picture whereby hangs an interesting tale.

Having decided to take for a subject the well-known Biblical incident, Mr. Prinsep cast about him for models. Chancing to be at Lord Hillingdon's, he mentioned the matter in the presence of his lordship's bailiff. "I know the ugliest pig in Kent," declared the latter, confidentially. And the "ugliest pig in Kent" was quickly domiciled

in Kensington, and systematically hunted hither and thither daily with the view of obtaining certain details of attitude. I am not quite sure whether the pig was actually made to run down a "steep place"—namely, the roof of an out-house. However, we may be sure that the fact of its working in a good cause did *not* reconcile the animal to its curious fate.

When the picture was finished, big-game hunting commenced in the Holland Park district. In other words, the original "Gadarene Swine" received the "happy dispatch" from the painter's express rifle. The first shot passed through its body, and then went whistling into Holland Park.

In the case of the picture, "The Emperor Theophilus Choosing His Wife"—exhibited in 1891—it is an interesting fact that all the ladies depicted were sketched from among Mr. Prinsep's own acquaintances and friends, some of them being Society ladies famous for their beauty. Again, take "A Versailles," which was begun in Paris. Some of the "properties" were painted from Irving's "Dead Heart," which was being played at the time, the dresses being brought over from Paris to London by Mr. Prinsep himself.

"In this picture," remarked the great artist to me, "I wanted one woman to have a fierce look in her eyes. This expression, however, was utterly lacking in my model

until I accidentally mentioned her daughter-in-law, when the old lady flared up terribly. This young woman, it appeared, had coaxed her son away from her."

Almost everyone is aware that the newly-

elected R.A. has to paint a picture (minimum value £100) for presentation to the Academy, but the fact is not so generally known that a piece of plate has also to be presented; so that the Academy now possesses a curious and historical collection of plate. Mr. Prinsep's diploma picture, "La Revolution," was exhibited this year.

As Mr. Prinsep lived next door to the late Lord Leighton, and saw him every day for thirty-one years, it may be assumed that he was very intimate with the great President of the Academy. The most curious story Mr. Prinsep tells about his friend is the marvellously adroit way in which Leighton went through with a partridge shooting party at Balcarres (Lord Lindsay's place in Scotland), without betraying to the gillies and his fellow-guests his utter ignorance of the sport. Indeed, it is doubtful whether he had ever before handled a gun.

Leighton, unlike his successor, was no sportsman, though he was long connected with the Artist Volunteers. Mr. Prinsep was also an original member of the famous corps, which he left in 1885, with the rank of major.



"THE DIVA THEODORA" (1890)—("EMPRESS AND COMEDIAN"). She was the wife of Justinian, and is depicted "acting the part" of Empress as in the days before her marriage. Her favourite, Antonia, is whispering in her ear.



"THE BROKEN IDOL" (1863).

A Christian slave in a Roman household has broken an idol in a fit of religious enthusiasm, and is brought up for judgment before his mistress. She is surrounded by her friends, who are crowned with roses as for a feast. The slave-driver has placed the broken pieces of the idol on the little table. Behind are seen cowering various members of the slave's family. Across the hall other slaves are listening fearfully, for the delinquent has commenced to preach Christ before his strange audience.

His hobby, if he has one at all, is literary work. He has written two novels and two plays. Both of his dramatic pieces were accepted and produced—"Cousin Dick," and "Monsieur le Duc," both produced by John Hare.

The funny stories told by this delightful man are practically inexhaustible. When he first went to Italy he had some trouble with his passport. Coming home from Venice once, this latter was taken for examination as usual at Peschiera, the frontier town. "My name," remarked Mr. Prinsep, "is Valentine Cameron. The authorities made two mistakes: they judged from the final 'e' that I must be a woman, and they took my second name for a title. Consequently, when I came to examine my passport, I found to my amazement that it was made out in the name of MADAME LA COMTESSA VALENTINA PRINCIPESSA!" The officials couldn't have even dreamed that "Madame la Comtessa" was a gigantic Englishman!

Here is another: "Being invited to a dinner party at Lady Cowper's, in St. James's Square, I was accosted by the groom of the chamber: 'What name, sir?' 'Prinsep.' 'What name, sir?' 'Prinsep,' with emphasis. You may judge of my astonishment when the groom then announced me as *Prince Hepp!*"

No reading is more interesting to the public than that which describes the early embarrassments of men who afterwards became famous. *Ergo*, listen to this: Burne-Jones and Prinsep were once at Milan when the former turned home-sick, and both turned homewards. "We had our tickets and thirty francs." Travelling in those days was not what it is now, so that there were many delays, caused mainly by avalanches and things. The thirty francs had dwindled to a few sous, when the two artists got into conversation in the train with some Frenchmen with whom they had travelled. "They lent us £5; but long before this our scanty stock of money prevented us from indulging in the luxuries enjoyed by our potential 'bankers.' Not wishing to reveal our temporary poverty, we explained that we were poor eaters and lived chiefly on coffee. After the loan had been negotiated, we were naturally dying to have a good square meal at a first-rate buffet, but we had to be content in the presence of our benefactors with coffee and bread-and-butter, for we wanted to stick to our expressed principles like true Britons."

Qui a bu, boira. No sooner has Mr. Prinsep related one of his genuinely funny stories,

than one is athirst for more. "I must tell you," he commenced, in his best style, "that the rooms at the Manchester Art Gallery are numbered consecutively 1, 2, 3, and so on. Well, a certain serious old couple who were doing the gallery systematically according to catalogue, strayed into the wrong room one day, and stopped in awe-struck admiration before Ford Madox Brown's heroic picture, 'The Death of King Lear.'

"'Wha's this 'un, Jinny?' 'A'll see, Jarge. A'll see, ef ye'll give me a minnit,' and the dear old lady consulted her catalogue with anxious care. Not knowing she was in the wrong room, she turned to the corresponding number, which by a curious coincidence chanced to be Landseer's 'There's Life in the Old Dog Yet.'

"The supposed title was communicated in a loud whisper, and then the old man in a burst of pity exclaimed, 'So there is, gal, so there is! *But, not much, not much.*'"

Once get Mr. Prinsep in retrospective mood, and you will wish for the mnemonic powers of a Freak. "A Manchester man," he began again, "once bought an 'old master.' The Manchester man was a rough, very rough, diamond (lots of money, but no 'culchaw'); and the 'old master' was guaranteed genuine but nameless. It was an Ex-Voto picture; *c'est-à-dire*, the person who commissioned the artist was depicted in it, kneeling appealingly at the Virgin's feet. On either side of the Virgin was the figure of a female saint, and one of these was being pointed to by the central figure. Underneath were the words, 'Ave Maria.' The wealthy old fellow was one day asked: 'What is the subject of that picture?' He scratched his head and looked puzzled. 'Well,' said he, presently, 'to tell you the truth, me an' the missis has often cracked our skulls over it, but we found it out at last. Th' fellow kneelin' down doesn't know which o' the gals he'd like ter marry, and the lady in the middle is wavin' 'er 'and, and sayin', '*Ave M'ria.*'"

Lest the many humorous anecdotes in this interview should cause readers to lose sight of Mr. Prinsep as a power in the artistic world, a few appreciative remarks may well be inserted here. For there is not in the whole Academy a more earnest painter, a more loyal member, than Mr. Prinsep, whose artistic creed it is that once elected to that immortal body, an artist should devote himself wholly and solely to the advancement of its high traditions. This whole-souled devotion to his art was probably fostered by Mr.



The beginning of October, 1789, found Paris in a tumult. The people were starving, and accused King Louis XVI. of sending corn out of the country. On October 6th the streets were filled with a mob of market women, 70,000 strong, and all shouting "Bread! Bread!" Having broken open the magazine in the Place de la Croix they armed themselves with spears, pikes, and muskets, the women set off towards Versailles to interview the King, and, perhaps, to sack the palace.

"A VERSAILLES" (1894).

Prinsep's very close intimacy with Lord Leighton. That life-long intimacy is a matter of artistic history.

Some idea of Mr. Prinsep's wide range of artistic subjects may be gained from the beautiful examples reproduced in these pages; they are placed in the order in which they were exhibited in the Academy.

Mr. Prinsep is a painstaking and skilful draughtsman; his colour is always harmonious, although it is usually somewhat quiet and suppressed. His handling is always firm,

a man of great wealth. Either of these two conditions would ordinarily result in a man having a house beautiful externally and internally; the union of the two in Mr. Prinsep, however, results in a sumptuously appointed palace replete with all that wealth can purchase and high artistic feeling dictate. More one cannot say, for to describe the residence in detail would be a mere string of superlatives. It is to be hoped, then, that Mr. Prinsep's wealth of anecdotal humour will not cause our readers to overlook these



"THE FISHERMAN AND JINN" (1895).

Readers of the "Arabian Nights" will remember how the fisherman took the brass vessel from the sea, and, in removing the lid, released the jinn, or geni, who had been imprisoned by Solomon. The figure is just forming in the smoke, to the fisherman's great astonishment. The background of the picture was painted at Ramsgate.

and his subjects treated with a good deal of breadth of execution and effect. That the painter has a strong feeling for beauty and grace is evidenced by two such charming pictures as "The Empress Theodora" and "The Emperor Theophilus Chooses His Wife."

Mr. Prinsep is a Royal Academician and

serious facts. Having known almost every literary and artistic celebrity that adorned the last half-century, it is no wonder that the artist should be a brilliant conversationalist and *raconteur* as well as a distinguished and loyal Academician, and an earnest and painstaking painter.

NOTE.—Our reproductions of the pictures in this Interview—with the exception of Mr. Prinsep's portrait and "The Saturday Dole"—are from photographs by Mr. F. Hollyer, Pembroke Square, Kensington; and Dixon and Son, Albany Street.