

In Memoriam:

SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES, BART. (Born Aug. 28, 1833; Died June 17, 1898.)

A TRIBUTE FROM FRANCE.

By ROBERT DE LA SIZERANNE.

I KNEW Burne-Jones but slightly, and for that very reason I may venture to write about him for his fellow-countrymen; for if I had been intimate with his life, his home, the details of his daily existence, I should be tempted to write his biography, and the lovers of art in England are fully informed as to the biography of Burne-Jones, or if a new one were needed, an Englishman would write it better than I.

But I fancy myself placed in a better position than an Englishman for forming a general estimate of the artist, since the memories we preserve of a friend or a neighbour are complicated by details which have little to do with his career as a painter. To tell how Burne-Jones lived and ate, travelled, received his friends, or dined with them; to record his home life, his political opinions, and the hours he kept, would form, no doubt, an interesting study of the man, overloaded with many minor facts, common to many men who, though sharing his tastes and his political opinions, could not paint the "Chant d'Amour" or "King Cophetua." I know nothing of what Burne-Jones may have had in common with other men. I never saw him even walk in the streets mingling with thousands of his fellow-creatures. I cannot conceive of him as scrambling up an omnibus or riding a bicycle.

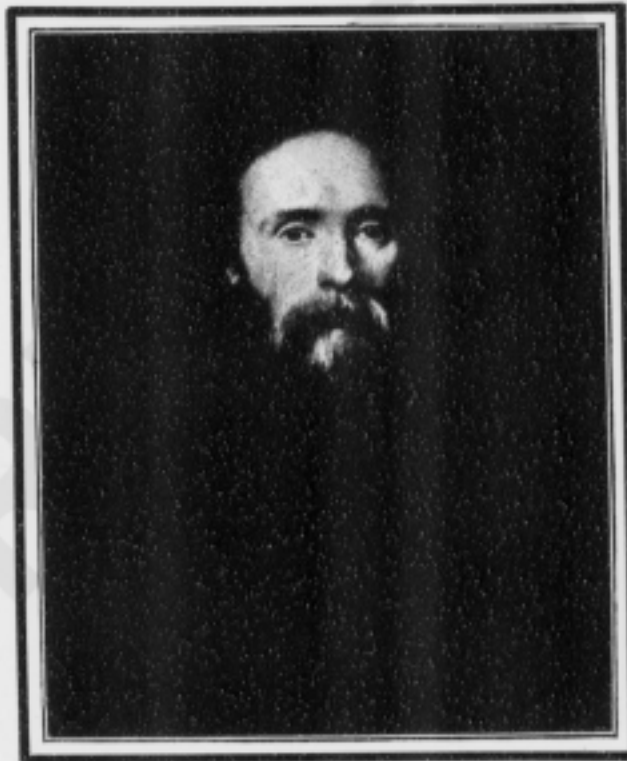
My memory always brings him before me as I saw him one midsummer afternoon in his house, The Grange, saying things which no one but he could have said, surrounded by works which no one but he could have created. The very action of his hands—

his sole purpose being to point out some feature of his pictures—seemed, as he walked, to raise up figures on the walls, and hours slipped by without anything in word or gesture suggesting to my mind that this was but a man like other men. And when, standing on his threshold, he bid me good-bye, saying, "I hope you will come again to London, and that I may see you," I promised myself that I would not run the risk of weakening this impression by repeating it; I replied in vague phrases, but I firmly resolved to go there no more.

It was in 1878 that attention was first drawn in France to this singular painter, who seemed to dwell so far away from our art and our life. His "Merlin and Vivien," sent to the Universal Exhibition, was an attraction to the critics, but not to the public. Not till ten years later, in 1889, did a certain number

of lovers of art stand amazed in front of "King Cophetua," exhibited, if I mistake not, between two pictures by Watts. It was a revelation. The subject was unfamiliar to French people, the painter unknown to them, the treatment new.

And yet we gazed with secret sympathy at this enigmatical picture. As we came out of the Gallery of Machinery, in which the rumble of wheels fatigued our ears, and the writhing of endless bands wearied our eyes, we found ourselves in the silent and beautiful English Art Section, and we felt as though everywhere else in the exhibition we had seen nothing but matter, and here we had come on the exhibition of the soul. The great idealist writer who delighted with his original views all the



THE LATE SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES, BART.

(From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.)