

FINESSE:
A New Description
by
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Chapter One
(Imperfection)

In front of the house is a small court enclosed with iron railings.

The house is of Portland stone and white brick. Its façade stands forward from the normal building-line and the whole of the projecting part is unglazed forming, in effect, an open verandah in three tiers.

The figures at second-floor level are freestanding versions, in Coade stone, of the caryatides at the Erechtheion at Athens. (The Curator had probably seen the Roman copies at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, during his time in Italy when Kemble first played Macbeth and both Rousseau and Voltaire passed away.) The Gothic corbels built into the piers, between the windows of the first and second galleries, come from the 14th century north front of Westminster Hall where they formed

pedestals in the niches on either side of the entrance. They were inserted into the façade after Napoleon died.

The houses on either side of the Museum were built by the Curator at the height of the 'Romantic Age'. The house on the left was the Curator's residence for 19 years. At his death he left it in trust as part of his endowment. The endowment provides the rental income to fund the Museum.

"I apologize for the lack of perfect symmetry in the group," says the Curator. "It came into my hands at different times."

A flight of stone steps leads to the ground floor, through the porch into the recess and hall, where the hall has walls coloured to imitate porphyry.

"The philosopher?"

"No," says the Curator. "The igneous rock."

On the walls are ten circular plaques of patent stone representing classical subjects.

On the west wall there are nymphs decorating a term; a sacrifice to Bacchus; nymphs binding Cupid; and (in the telephone recess) a sacrifice to Venus. On the east wall, over the dining-room door, a harvest. Within the inner lobby, Aeneas carrying Anchises; nymphs awaking Cupid; a vintage; and Cupid, bound. Over the staircase arch there is the Departure of Trajan for the chase based on the relief medallion on the arch of Constantine.

In an opening in the northwest corner of the outer hall is a marble bust of a painter. It is a posthumous bust, exhibited in the year of the painter's death. Over it is a cast of 'a beautiful female torso found at Capua' and now in the Museo Nazionale at Naples. On the brackets to the left and right are casts of two figures the originals of which (now lost) probably formed part of the stalls in St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

The roses on the ceiling are from antique models. In the dome of the inner hall the rose is based on an original in the soffit of the Roman portico of the Temple of Mars the Avenger.

On the marble table under a basso-relievo of a sacrifice to Venus is a vase cast from the antique and, beside it, two

specimens of ancient English sculpture. One is a priest, with a book and rosary, a fine specimen of art from the 11th century; the other is a chorister holding a scroll. Both are from Windsor Castle.

"The folding doors and the fanlight above the sculptures contain three lozenges of English medieval glass that produce an agreeable effect, particularly when the door of the entrance into the hall is open," says the Curator. "The rest of the panels are Flemish or German of the 16th, 17th or early 18th century."

From the inner hall we pass to the staircase, which, owing to a peculiarity of the site, widens towards the far end. The stair is a stone cantilever or 'geometrical' stair with wrought-iron balustrade and mahogany handrail in runs of from five to nine feet.

"Notice the walls are painted in imitation of giallo antico marble, although now much darker than they were in my day."

Chapter Two
(The Mobled Queen)

"These may be seen as one room separated only by two projecting piers formed into bookcases," says the Curator as we enter the dining room and library, "from which springs a canopy composed of three semicircular arches. The open plan makes it possible to extend the dining table (by adding leaves) into the library area, when a larger number of guests are to be entertained."

"The bookcases contain 'tall, good-looking books'¹," I say.

"And all the novels of the Gothic age... 'With their heroines, badly drawn, but impeccably lovely,'" continues the Curator.

"'You had to see them on the vignettes, prey to freezing apparitions, starkly white in those caves. Nothing could be more stimulating than this ultra-romanesque, hyper-

¹ Breton, Communicating Vessels

sophisticated literature. All those castles of Otranto, of Udolpho, of the Pyrenees, of Lovel, of Athlin, and of Dunbayne, crevassed with great cracks and eaten by 'subterranean passages.'² "

The decorations derive their inspiration partly from classical sources, while in the canopies, over the bookcases, there is indeed a Gothic touch.

"Note the use of mirrors," says the Curator. "Especially in the recesses in the library. The mirrors give the illusion that the ceiling is repeated in another room."

The style of these rooms is peculiar to the Curator's taste though the decorations probably owe something to coloured engravings of Roman frescoes found in the grounds of the Villa Negroni. Over the fireplace in the dining room we see the Curator's portrait.

"This is almost the last picture painted by the artist."

² *ibid.*

Proceeding to the right, from the fireplace, we come to the projecting pedestal under the 'canopy' that divides the rooms. Here is an Apulian amphora of the late 4th century B.C. bought when the Curator first built his Museum. Above it, standing on the glass case, is a stoneware beer-jug from Siegburg. It is dated in the year of Marlowe's murder and said to have been discovered in digging the foundation of a house in Bath.

"This is an Elizabethan 'chopin' exceptional for the position of the handle, which being central, the smallest quantity of liquid may be poured from it without spilling, even when full. It bears the arms of the Empire and the German states," says the Curator. "It belonged to the family of the Spekes, of Hasleberry in Wilts, as the decorative armorial bearings explains: First coat, the arms of the Spekes of Wilts, Somerset, and Devon. Second coat, 1st and 4th, the Percy arms, 2nd and 3rd, the arms of the Willoughby family: the escutcheon of pretence pertains to the ancient name of Chawlas. Third coat, 1st, the arms of Speke; 2nd, the extinct family of the name of Poltimore, of Poltimore in Devon; 3rd, the Percy arms; 4th, the lord of Iloo, of Iloo in Bedfordshire, and Hastings in Sussex, father to Anne Bullein: the escutcheon of pretence was anciently born by the Lord-Treasurer of Wales, which office was conferred upon the representative of the family by

Queen Elizabeth. It is an excellent elucidation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Act II, Scene 2), where the Prince of Denmark teases a young man about to act the queen in his 'Mouse Trap': 'Your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine!'"

"I'm reminded of Fulbert's scissors in the museum *Écu de France...*" I say. "The pair known to Radiguet..."³

"On the fireplace are two plaques by a sculptor, modeled for a vase presented to Kemble on his retirement from the stage. One represents 'Kemble crowned by Melpomene', the other 'Kemble inspired by the Genius of Shakespeare'. This oil painting, completed in the year of Goethe's death, is titled 'The Contention of Oberon and Titania', now, 'thanks to the bituminous pigment' (wrote a critic), 'resembling an aerial view of the Trinidad Pitch Lake'. Here is a little picture from the time of the Pamphlet Wars⁴ of the apocryphal scene of 'Lady Macbeth prevented from stabbing the king by his resemblance to her father as he sleeps', the dagger dropping from her nerveless hand. And here, a watercolour containing all the flowers mentioned in the Bard's works, flanked by a

³ Devil in the Flesh

⁴ Richard Price, Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, etc.

cast of the Statford bust (decried by some to have little resemblance to Scheemakers' later version in Westminster Abbey, saying the Stratford travesty 'differed as much from the likeness of the man as it did from the figure in the Abbey'; yet, Scheemakers worked from imagination more than a century after the poet's death! I side with the sculptor of the Stratford bust who based his homage on the advice of the poet's relations, corroborated by a resemblance to the engraving in the folio and the assertion by Dr Johnson that it was a 'great likeness, indeed'.)"

On either side of this pedestal are small bronzes. On the left is Napoleon, after Canova (the famous bust commissioned from him by Lady Holland ('A perpetual souvenir of the Hero,' said she), placed 'on a column nearly seven feet high' and inscribed, in Greek, after Homer, and carefully selected by Lord Holland: "Not much longer shall he be exiled from his dear native land, no, not though bonds of iron hold him"), and a vase in the form of a grotesque head, origin unknown. On the right, Napoleon as First Consul. It is inscribed: "A man must accomplish his destiny!" The adjacent bookshelves contain the works of other Napoloenists: O'Meara, Hazlitt, Las Cases, and M. De Bourrienne.

On the east side of the library, over the chimneypiece, upon the cornice of the bookcases, springs a large flat arch forming a recess. To connect the symmetry, there are two semicircular arches. Over the chimneypiece is a large mirror with some small figurines. To the left and right of this are bas-reliefs inspired by texts in Hesiod, placed here in the last months of the Curator's life.

"Upon the shelf forming the cover to the bookcases are several Etruscan vases..."

"They are in fact Greek colonial wares," I think.

"Rich in form and decoration; and also a specimen of Wedgwood's imitation of Etruscan pottery known as 'Black Basalts'."

"Winckelmann felt the Etruscans had 'a more bilious and melancholic temperament than the Greeks'."

"Which is usually the lot of the greatest men, Aristotle and I believe. It is like my own nature: 'Fitted to profound investigation, but giving rise to emotions too violent, where the senses are not affected with that gentle agitation which

renders the soul perfectly susceptible to beauty,'" says the Curator. "'I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all these: but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, which, by often rumination, wraps me in a most humorous sadness...'"

"As you like it. Voltaire thought 'it ate Englishmen up'.⁵"

On the mantelpiece are four bronzes: Jupiter Serapis, 'Greek in appearance, but with Egyptian trappings', possibly antique; Vertumnus, possibly in part antique. Between these are a weight from a Roman steelyard, in the form of a head of Minerva, and a Chinese seated figure. At the south end of the room two arches open into what was originally (until the Great Westminster Fire) an open loggia.

⁵ Candide

"Here I installed an ornamental pump, supplied with excellent water from a well in the basement."

The sliding shutters to the two windows are faced internally with mirror, externally with rough wood. (The view from the street was less important.) There are two small bookcases filled with drawings, prints, and books. There is a projecting pedestal in the front of the middle pier, where until the Rule of Wild, sat the astronomical clock formerly belonging to his Royal Highness the Duke of York (see below). Behind it was a large mirrored panel. Between the piers at this end of the room were two deep recesses, surrounded with bookcases surmounted with busts of Homer, Shakespeare, Napoleon, Inigo Jones, and Camden terminated with two windows (the internal surface of the shutters to which were faced too with mirror).

"Camden?" I think.

"Wild did incredible damage during his tenure as Museum Director," says the Curator. "The formation of a new room off the ground floor anteroom (which reduced the depth of the recesses beside and above it), the rearrangement of the stained glass throughout the Museum including complete replacement of most originals with leaded lights of new

subject matter, the creation of new skylights over the staircases, the needless placement of glass floor-lights in the corridor, and the inane jettisoning of a number of plaster casts considered 'redundant'. If not for Wild's death... His 'interventions' are still being undone."

The west side of the room corresponds in design to the east, though with a continuous range of bookcases in the absence of the fireplace. On the projecting pedestal is a model of the tomb that the Curator erected for his wife on Elba, where he and his eldest son are also buried. The model is inscribed: 'Chere aimé, se souvenir de ceux qui ont tout sacrifié pour la liberté!' ('Dear friend, Remember those who sacrificed everything for freedom!') An identical inscription hangs in the south drawing room beneath the portrait (with poorly drawn hands) of the Curator's wife.

The ceiling is formed into compartments. It shows the construction of the floor above and is enriched with pictures of mythological content: Phoebus in his Car, preceded by Aurora and, led on by the Hours 'through heav'n's high road', the Morning Star; The Zephyrs are sporting in his train. The central compartment of the ceiling represents Pandora, whom the assembled Gods 'endowed with all their gifts'. Formed by

Vulcan, who is contemplating his work, she is dressed by the Graces, and presented by Minerva with a veil and cestus. Near her stands Pitho, the goddess of Persuasion; on the left are Phoebus, Diana, Mars, Venus and Cupid; on the right, Juno, Cybele and Bacchus. In the centre, Jupiter, attended by Victory and Nemesis, holds the fatal vase fraught with so much mischief of mankind. Iris is hovering in the sky, admiring; and Mercury, putting on his talaria, prepares to conduct the beautiful snare 'to th'unwiser son of Japhet'. In the oblong compartment nearest the door are the Horae, or seasons (anciently supposed to be only three), the keepers of the cloud gates, diffusing their various productions; and in the corresponding opposite compartment Night is advancing, with the Pleiades in her train. The picture in the semicircular compartment nearest the door is Epimentheus receiving Pandora. The one nearest the chimney is the opening of her vase, whence, according to the poet, issued all the cares and miseries of life.

On the west side of the dining room is the painting "The Snake in the Grass", bequeathed by the painter to his niece, and sold to the Curator in the year of Napoleon's death. There is a replica in the Tate, the Hermitage, and two private collections on the continent.

"The figure of Night – in the black veil – in the second panel from the fireplace – is based on my dear deceased wife."

Below the painting, on a sideboard, stand two empty knife-boxes.

Chapter Three
(Amboyna and Ew)

Turning to the north, there is a large window with mirrors in the 'lamb and muttons' (as Mary Lamb said to Charles when visiting with Hazlitt on the second night of the Belzoni celebrations) and enriched with scriptural subjects on glass. The stained glass, including two large panels depicting the Creation and the Last Judgment, was badly damaged by bomb-blast in the Battle of Britain, but rescued and stored and has recently been replaced in its original positions.

"From this window," remarks the Curator, "the courtyard, with its assemblage of ancient and modern art, and particularly the frieze of Grecian sculpture, are seen to great advantage. Compare the outline of this work with the two natural productions on the sides of the window, originally found growing in the hollow of an old oak pollard or ash tree in the woods of Stainstead Park."

The objects seen in the court are mostly fragments saved from buildings demolished in the Curator's time. Thus, the term and the capital below it, of Anglo-Flemish character, came from a building demolished when Marx was born. On the skyline to the north are two ammonite fossils flanking a terra-cotta bust of the Farnese Hercules (that is, the Lysippos sculpture Napoleon never obtained). On the parapet on the east side is a Coade stone urn.

Returning to the dining room, on the windowsill in the centre, is the large Apulian amphora acquired by the Curator at the sale of an aristocrat's collection after the Coup d'État of 18 Brumaire. According to Michaelis, the 'Neapolitan Vase' (for some years in the possession of the King of Naples) was found in Lecce shortly after the Storming of the Bastille. Purchased by General Oudinot it was sent to England and sold for £1500 to a Lord C—. (The Curator bought it for £68 5s.) The subject of the decoration appears to be the sacrifice prepared at Zeus's altar by Oinomaos, King of Elba, father of Hippodameia, and Pelops, her suitor, prior to the chariot race between them.

On either side of the 'Neapolitan Vase' are Italian marble vases formerly belonging to the miniaturist, Mr. Inchbald, and

two squat jars of Egyptian alabaster. The two very large Chinese celadon vases on stands were given to the Curator by a Viscount from Cricket, whose house he had built on commission.

'The effect of these works is considerably heightened by the looking-glass in the splayed jambs of the window.'

The two rooms contain 43 antique vases of other kinds, mostly acquired by the Curator at the sales of collections at Christie's between the Battle of Marengo and the Treaty of Amiens. In addition, there are five more fine specimens of Black Basalt.

Of plasters there are six busts cast from antique examples and supposed to represent Geta, Plautilla, Faustina, Sappho, Dione and Flora (though not convincing). They are curiously reflected in the convex mirrors placed alongside. In recesses near the library windows are the small busts of Homer, Shakespeare, Dr Johnson, Camden and Inigo Jones.

"Camden?" I say.

In recesses on the west side are figures of a seated woman (after an antique Polymnia in the Vatican) and a seated man,

in classical attitudes. On the fireplace side are two bronzed plaster models of antique cisterns.

Two inscribed cinerary urns are placed in the recess over the mantelpiece of the library. Two small frames contain documents bearing the signatures of famed architects.

"Most of the furniture consists of that I bought for my domestic use," says the Curator.

The large armchair to the right of the fireplace is an important example of English furniture. Nothing is known of its origin or when the Curator acquired it, but it has often been attributed to Chippendale. The two trellis-back bergères (similar to those made for the Governors' Suite in the Bank of England) were bought from an upholsterer on Golden Square (£25 4s. for a set of eight) and the daybed was almost certainly procured there too, along with the bookcases containing: the four folio editions of Shakespeare's works, formerly the property of Kemble, some with burn marks; Boydell's Shakespeare, with proof impressions of the plates, selected by Alderman Boydell; an illuminated copy of the Bible; a manuscript on vellum of the works of Falvius Josephus; a translation of Scamozzi by Inigo Jones; the Museo Piu

Clementino; l'Antiquité expliquée by Montfaucon; Voyage Pittoresque de Naples et Sicile; Histoire de l'Art par les Monumens; Iconologie Historique par M. de la Fosse; Tableaux Historiques de la Révolution Francaise; Cérémonies et Coutumes Religieuses de tous les Peuples du Monde; the designs and constructions of Perronet; a complete copy of Piranesi's works; and the chairs aligned in front. Against the pier stands an elegant library table which the Curator must have designed and which the same upholsterer may have executed. The Curator had it brought over from his residence at Chelsea Hospital in the year Moscow repelled the Great Armée.

In the window is a table with a marble slab inlaid with semi-precious stones. Originally a sideboard stood in this position, but was sold (most improperly) by the Trustees when the Curator died. The table dates from Voltaire's Philosophic Letters to the English, but was considerably altered under the Rule of Wild. The table and another in the anteroom were brought from Lord Y-'s house, formerly Robert Walpole's (Horace's father), during the Curator's demolition of that building for the new Chelsea Hospital Infirmary when Napoleon's son was born. A third, the large round mahogany table (£20), was purchased later by the Trustees for its monthly meetings.

Standing on this table (moved by Wild) is the astronomical clock mounted in amboyna wood and ormolu by Raingo of Paris. Formerly the property of Frederick, Duke of York, it was bought by the Curator (£75) in the year of the Duke's death. In recent years, five of these clocks are known to have been in existence. There is one in Queen Elizabeth's boudoir at Windsor Castle and another, in private ownership, which has a musical box in its base.

When he first built the Museum, the Curator added three Axminster carpets specially to order, and two hearthrugs (£81 15s) to cover the floor of the two rooms but left a border of exposed floorboards all round to show the hardwood. (At the time, Axminster was the most expensive form of English carpet available.) Now they are fragile, so acrylic replicas of the carpets have been laid in their place.

The chairs against the west wall are of Cantonese origin, from the year of Montesquieu's Persian Letters, after designs that were undoubtedly sent out from England. They are of padouk wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl. They bear the arms of the Wrinklemarshes of Blackheath. Sir Page Turner, the Wrinklemarsh nephew and heir, sold the chairs after the Treaty

of Paris. The Curator acquired them a year later at the time of his marriage.

The small round table under the 'canopy' between the two rooms is made of ew. On it is a model of a domed hall designed by the Curator on the dawn of the Reign of Terror and produced for the Museum around the assassination of the Czar Nicholas II.

Chapter 4

(Continued)

The office, whose decorations were restored when Stalin suffered his stroke, contains a large number of antique marble fragments, nearly all forming part of the collection made for Henry Holland (architect to the Prince of Wales), when the Directory seized power over the Convention.

"The ornaments are like those that were in Drury Lane Theatre: mostly frieze fragments, candelabra bases and shafts, enriched pilasters, carved furniture feet, etc., and date from the time of the Roman Empire. All originally came from sites in Rome or those of neighbouring Imperial villas."

Some time after the death of Henry Holland, the collection came into the Curator's possession, and he distributed it here and elsewhere in the Museum during the time of Bonaparte's

defeats at Dresden and Leipzig. (One mustn't confuse Henry Holland with Lord Henry 'Fox' Holland, the Napoleonist, although both were Whigs.) The doorways were widened towards the end of the last century but have now (with the exception of the entrance to the dining room) been narrowed again to their original widths, with the addition of rounded arches.

"The shelf across the window, with its decorative ornaments on the underside, displays a large fungus from the rocks of the island of Sumatra, which will be appreciated by the lovers of natural history," says the Curator.

"I believe the 'fungus' is in fact a Neptune's Cup Sponge."

On the ceiling above, the central rose is copied from one of the enrichments in the frieze of the Temple of Vespasian. On the south wall, over the doorway, there is a cast of 'The Apotheosis of Homer', from the original marble formerly in the Palazzo Colonna, purchased by the British Museum for The Masque of Anarchy (produced by Mrs. Inchbald). The two large 2nd century A.D. reliefs on either side of the doorway are perhaps fragments of a statue base.

"These are delicious antique fragments in the true gusto antico."

To the right (west) of the doorway rests a Pietra Dura panel, probably from an early 17th century Italian cabinet; a wood figure from the 15th century Newport Pagnell Church, near Tyringham; an ivory relief of Inigo Jones; a bronze crucifixion, probably 14th century; a wax relief of Ugolino; and a panel with four bronze ornaments, origin unknown. To the left of the doorway hangs the bronze relief of a draped female (16th century).

On the desk in front of the west window is a lion in plaster, modeled on the antique lion at Florence. It seems to have been one of a pair bought from a sculptor – 'the first recorded purchase by [the Curator] on an object (other than furniture and books) still in the Museum' – when Burke published Reflections on the Revolution in France. The lions stood on top of bookcases in the back parlour.

In the recess below is a recumbent female in alabaster from the Causeway Market (no longer) and a bronze bull on an alabaster pedestal: 'The Bull breaking the Egg', purchased in the year Napoleon died. The origin of the bronze is unknown.

The pedestal bears the arms of Trapani, Sicily, and probably formed the base of a copy of the 'Trapani Madonna'.

"Note the small table on castors which slides into the knee-hole of the desk under the window," says the Curator. "This was made when Marx was born, especially for this position by 'Tom Martyr' (a woodworker), and may be extended by a flap at the back when pulled out. I worked here on a quarto drawing board."

"And the two brass grilles on the floor?"

"They were for hot air to pass into the room from the central heating system; there was a stove in the basement. The skylight is filled with coloured glass, alternating light and dark yellow."

Above the doorway along the north side is a marble panel with Italian scroll ornament from the 15th century. On either side of the doorway are bronze statuettes on pedestals (probably German or Flemish, early 17th century). To the left of the doorway there are two medallions in Black Basalt; a bronze plaquette of Oliver Cromwell; an impression, in lead, of the seal of St. Mary Magdalene Hospital in King's Lynn, refounded

when The Tempest was performed at Whitehall Palace; a bronze plaquette of Roman and Barbarian soldiers (16th century); and a bronze plaquette of the Fall of Phaëthon by Moderno labeled: "Here Phaëthon lies who in the sun-god's chariot fared. And though greatly he failed, more greatly he dared..."

Notably, on the east wall, there is a portion of a Roman statue base, with bull's head and garlands, dating from the first half of the 1st century A.D. Another fragment of the same work with a bull's head and honeysuckle ornament is on the shelf above. The other fragments include architectural enrichments and parts of candelabra. The four cinerary urns (1st and 2nd century A.D.) in recesses near the floor were among those bought by the Curator after the Coup d'État of 18 Brumaire.

"To the left and right of the entry to the dressing room are glass cupboards, formerly containing books in folio but now filled with miscellaneous curiosities, removed from their original positions for various reasons."

The cupboard on the left contains more antique fragments, chiefly again from the Holland collection. On the top shelf, there are two Roman portrait busts: a bearded head of

Dionysius, Roman 1st-2nd century A.D., but in the Greek 5th-century manner (thought at one time to be a Julia-Claudian Prince, perhaps even 'the aged Emperor Augustus'!), in turn resembling Fufluns, the Etruscan god of wine; and beside it a smaller head of a Roman personage of the early Flavian period. On the middle shelf there is the vase titled the 'The Curator's Painter'; and a Campanian bell krater of the 4th century B.C. In the back, there is a fragment of della Robbia ware, or Florentine glazed terracotta.

The top shelf of the cupboard on the right contains a model for the statue of Architecture on the monument of Michelangelo in Sta. Croce, Florence. On the middle shelf there are several bronze statuettes from Roman myth: the silent Angerona; Hercules, by da Vinci's nephew; Atlas, part of an ink-stand; Flora (Venetian), probably part of an andiron; a warrior; Mars; and some tin-glazed Maiolica cups (one signed by Orazio Fontanci) filled with lead pencils.

On the lower shelf, there is a Roman lamp with a Christian monogram, probably an 18th century fake of second century form; a pedestal for a statue; and a Roman lamp with horse-head handle (the horse being a chthonic beast associated with the underworld), probably from Pompeii or Herculaneum.

"The dressing room is finished throughout in oak-graining," says the Curator, "restored when Stalin suffered his stroke. It is lit by two windows, one commanding a view of the ruins of the courtyard. The ceiling has a lantern in the centre, the upper part of which is a model of the domical light in a hall I built with a canopy that hovered 'like a great out-spread bat's wing'."

The model was installed first in the ceiling of the Lobby beyond, leading from the dressing room to the colonnade, but was then moved by the Curator to its present position when Goethe died. The ceiling as a whole is in the Curator's late manner.

"Over the doorway on the north wall once hung my design for a classical dog kennel, the 'Canine Residence' I called it, which now hangs on the west wall, made for the Bishop of Derry at the time Kemble first played Macbeth and both Rousseau and Voltaire passed away. Now there is an aperture through to the narrow passage beyond. This aperture was blocked up by Wild after my death and re-opened recently by the Trustees."

To left and right of this are drawings of Baronscourt, Ireland as remodeled by the Curator for the Marquess of Abercorn when

de Gouges published Rights of Woman (the same year Paine wrote Rights of Man). To the left and right of the doorway are pen-and-ink drawings of banditti.

On the south wall, top centre, is a drawing of the Curator's tomb on Elba. This originally hung on the door (now missing) between the study and the dressing room. On the left, there is an engraved map of Paris and environs as it looked at the start of the American War of Independence. On the right, there is water-colour portrait of Miss B—, a friend of the Curator's in his later years, and a framed copy of Rousseau's Confessions.

"Rousseau's expression of sexuality attracts me; his account of two different sorts of love: of 'seeing myself for the first time in the arms of a woman' [Vol. II, Bk. V], and of taking pleasure in 'sleeping in the bed she has slept in' [Vol. 1, Bk. II]...To the left of the doorway, engraved on satin, is 'La Liberté des Suisses'."

On satin, Napoleon was deeply disappointed by Henry 'Fox' Holland's parliamentary inefficacy in attaining his initial appeals for release from St. Helena. It was clear to Napoleon that he must restate his whole position, 'both with regard to

the peace treaty and the form which his imprisonment was taking.' As a result, he composed a statement known as the Remonstrance, which took the form of a letter to his jailer (Hudson Lowe) from Count Montholon, one of the two leading members of his entourage. The letter from Montholon began with a restatement of the legal case against Napoleon's detention, but it went on to claim that the Government were treating him with savagery by exposing him 'to the parching heat...enveloped in clouds and fogs during three parts of the year...in the driest and dampest country in the world; a climate that is most unfavourable to the health of the Emperor.' He listed the indignities to which Lowe was subjecting him: 'His insistence on rank of General (not Emperor), the restrictions on movement, the withholding of books and newspapers, the opening or suppression of his letters.' It was the devoted Count de Las Cases – who had asked to accompany Napoleon into exile to transcribe, within the short span of year, Mémorial de Ste. Hélène,⁶ in which Napoleon restates his career in terms as the heir of the Revolution and creator of liberal France – was tasked with getting the Remonstrance to 'Fox' when Napoleon finished dictating it to Montholon. Las Cases claimed this to be the

⁶ Julien Sorel's 'rulebook'

first document to get back secretly from St. Helena. It was written on squares of satin (cut from a large piece obtained by Las Cases) and sewn into the lining of a waistcoat.

To right of the doorway, there is a tender pencil drawing and frames containing sulphur casts from gems.

"Do you see the antique aspersoir?" asks the Curator.

"Do you mean the oriental perforated brass bowl, to which a handle of Roman origin has been attached?" I reply.

The window here looks into the courtyard.

"The original yellow-coloured glass was put back only recently. Over here is a framed Address to [me] from the Architects of England. And here, the presentation of the Architectural Medal in gold, silver and bronze; the three ages of the Etruscans."

Beside the window looking into the courtyard there are three more framed documents: on top, the Diploma of the Accademia del Disegno at Florence, awarded to the Curator to undertake his Grand Tour to 'finish the work of education and complete

*the Gentleman*⁷ (unfortunately, while in Rome, cut short by the Curator's 'paralysed energies' due to the 'repeated solicitations' from his travel companion the Bishop of D-); an Address of Thanks from the Freemasons, for help in the purchase of houses in Great Queen Street; and, below, another Address of Thanks for a gift of £500. Below again, there is a drawing called 'A Scene from Macbeth'.

On the shelf by the window is a pair of iron stirrups, said to have been found on the banks of the River Boyne and a bronze figure (? Italian) on a wooden base, originally part of the ornamental pump installed by the Curator in the front loggia.

Below the shelf are three oval Black Basalt reliefs made when British troops arrived in Boston. The subjects are 'A Feast of the Gods', 'The Fall of the Titans' and 'The Slaughter of Niobe's Children'. On the right is a terracotta figure of Neptune, probably French.

The roundels in the windows are part of a collection of ancient glass distributed by the Curator in various parts of the Museum, now mostly stored. The pump, washbasin and shelves

⁷ Locke, Some Thoughts on Education

have been recreated here (after a model in cork), following exactly an engraving in the year of the Curator's Medal showing the dressing room in great detail. In the recess leading from the dressing room into the Museum are lead busts of Palladio and Inigo Jones. The door to the left leads to the water closet.

"My friend Mrs H— described so well the circular bell-light above the recess as producing 'that soft primrose hue so peculiarly adapted for the exhibition of marbles'. Shall we look?"

Chapter Five

(Light)

*'It is always as if a beam of light were illuminating a part of a region, the remainder of which disappears in an indeterminate cloud but is still there in its indeterminacy.'*⁸

"We are passing through the Corinthian colonnade into the corridor lighted in that 'primrose hue' that show the objects on the walls to greatest advantage."

The corridor contains a variety of antique marbles and casts. The bronze relief, 'The Escape of Cloelia', is to the right of the entrance to the Picture Room. Further to the right is a terracotta relief, 'Britannia attended by Peace and Plenty' (made during the Battles of Lexington, Concord and Bunker

⁸ Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art

Hill). An interesting marble fragment (on the west wall) is a section of the lower part of a rare variety of the statue of the Ephesian Diana. On the same wall is a fragment of a child's sarcophagus, showing a chariot race of cupids in the Circus. Among the casts, important Greek and Roman temples are represented.

"On the east wall are capitals from the Erechtheion. The great capital at the south end of the corridor and the cornice above represent the Temple of Jupiter Stator at Rome."

"Castor and Pollux."

"On the north and south walls, there are other details from the temple, as well as from the Temples of Vesta at Tivoli and of Mars the Avenger at Rome, and a detail from the frieze of the Temple of Jupiter Tonans."

"Vespasian."

On the west wall, to left and right of the doorway, are two casts of the corbels under the ends of the label of the Great South Window of Westminster Hall. The staircase at this end of the corridor leads to the student dormitory.

"This room is well-lighted, peculiarly adapted for sleeping, based on principles of the cinquecento.⁹ And the drawers below the bunks, they are filled with architectural drawings and prints for the instruction of the visitors."

On the drawing-tables are various cases to hold drawing instruments. The Curator's own drawing instruments can be seen in the larger of the two display cases on the left-hand table. The small display case contains a set of drawing instruments, such as the Curator might have owned, dating from the French Revolution, purchased recently online by the Museum.

The room is curiously constructed, independently of the main walls, so that the two long skylights which light the drawing-tables also illuminate the exhibits on the walls down to ground floor level and even give a ray of light to the crypt. At the west end is an aperture in the floor, affording a bird's-eye view of the Museum, protected by an iron railing. On the shelf at the west end is a patent model for a method of laying sewers.

⁹ *unione* (Titian), *cangiante* (Michelangelo), *sfumato* and *chiaroscuro* (da Vinci and Giorgione)

"For structural reasons this room can only be visited by a few people at a time," says the Curator. "Regrettably, therefore, it can only be seen by special arrangement."

Chapter 6
(The Monkey Suite)

By the window is a table with a marble slab inlaid with semi-precious stones, upon which sits Voltaire's Philosophic Letters to the English. A side-table of similar style and date stands at the opposite end of the room. Both these tables and another in the anteroom were brought from a Lord's house in Chelsea, formerly occupied by Robert Walpole (Henry's father), and demolished by the Curator when he built the Chelsea Hospital Infirmary in the year Napoleon's son was born.

The miscellaneous collection of casts and models hung on the walls appears to consist largely of samples given to the Curator by stucco and artificial wall manufacturers.

In the two recesses in the north wall are 15th century Antwerp retables. Opposite, on the left jamb of the window recess, is a square oak patera from the 13th century roof of the Painted Bed Chamber at Westminster. The painting over the fireplace is a small version on copper of the altarpiece in Besançon

Cathedral (to which Proudhon attended before meeting Fourier). The pottery includes some medieval and later pieces dug up in various parts of London.

"In the cupboard on the right of the fireplace are a number of Mexican pots, while on the table against the north wall is a Spanish lusterware vase from Manises."

There are two restored cinerary urns in recesses in the west wall. The west side of the room has an opening in the centre of which is a wooden model of the lantern erected on the roof of Westminster Hall at its restoration for Inchbald's The Masque of Anarchy.

"And this is a plaster bust of Monsieur Cuvier. It was said to be 'an excellent likeness' by Madame Cuvier. He reminded Napoleon of the value of museums, which, 'speak ceaselessly to the eye, and inspire a taste for science in young people'. He was tireless in his efforts to convey his message through lecturing and writing, uncommon in men of science, closely studying even the style of the famous actor Talma, star of the *Comédie Française*, with the result of entralling his audiences with his oratory and flare."

On either side of this recess are 17th century German stained glass windows.

"The scriptural subjects, I believe, are suited to the destination of the place and increase its somber character."

The lights on the north side consist of two panels with Locke's Two Treatises on Government. Near the door of the Monkey Parlour is a 17th century German crossbow, inlaid with ivory; also a scold's branks and a set of shackles.

"Implements of iron to the honour of humanity no longer in use..."

The Monkey Yard can be seen through the window of the Parlour. The Monkey Cloister consists of two arches made up of stones, which originally formed window openings in the old House of Lords, Westminster, a 13th century building demolished when the Curator built his Museum. In the centre, between the arches, is a well-preserved late 14th century canopy removed from the north front of Westminster Hall at the restoration for The Masque of Anarchy. The arches are surmounted by an 18th century Corinthian capital on which is a bust of the Duke of York, brother of George IV.

The Monkey Tomb is made up of miscellaneous carved fragments including, at the head, a Corinthian capital of the 'Tivoli' type used by the Curator previously.

Other fragments in the Monkey Court include several from St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster (14th century), the old House of Commons. These were removed after the Coup d'État of 18 Brumaire, when the building was enlarged to provide accommodation for the Irish members.

"The most interesting fragment, a canopy from the arcading of the east front, is on the roof of the heating chamber and can only be seen from the Dressing Room window on the ground floor."

Proceeding westward along the corridor, we come to a window recess with a view into the courtyard. This recess, considerably altered after The Communist Manifesto, contains plaster casts and models, notably: a dying Spartacus; and "Britannia" submitted for competition for a naval monument (230 ft. high) proposed for Greenwich Hill (unbuilt) and a monument to Lord M—, eventually erected during the Coup d'État of 18 Brumaire, in Westminster Abbey.

"This is 'Angels opening the prison gates for St. Peter'."

"Not 'Angels Releasing a Captive'?"

"Sadly charred in the Blitz."

*Opposite the window, within an arch, are Faith and Charity,
models for part of a monument to a Miss Simian...*

Chapter 7
(Anti-Ante)

"The anteroom into which the corridor conducts us is lighted from a window in a recess. The ceiling is in compartments in the form of St. Andrew's cross; the centre is decorated with a large rose, cast from the original in York Minster, and the extremities are finished with representations of pineapples. These were almost the only kinds of ornament the ancients admitted on the exterior of their domes," says the Curator. "The pineapple, as on the dome of the Mausoleum of Hadrian, and the triton on that of the Tower of the Winds."

"Are you certain these are not pine-cones?" I ask.

"The pinecone has been used a symbol of *eternity* since the time of the Assyrians. These are pineapples; signs of *hospitality*...Wait, perhaps; never mind; in modern works the simple and beautiful figure of the dome is sometimes destroyed by improper decoration. Of this bad taste the church of the

Invalides at Paris is a striking example. It is loaded with unmeaning ornament. The grandeur of the dome was ruined with a surface covering of tawdry gilding. How the man who conceived the grand idea of perpetuating his victories by a magnificent monument formed with the brass artillery taken from his enemies..."

"Colonne Vendôme. Eventually resolved by the Communards..."

"Puerile idea! But here is the 'master of the revels of the masquerade', The Swiss Count."

In the fireplace wall are recesses containing busts. That on the left was believed by the Curator to be a portrait of [J.J.] Heidegger, 'master of the revels' to King George II, the son of a Zürich clergyman who was influential in the management of the opera. He made a small fortune furnishing the spectacle for Motteux's opera Tomyris, Queen of Scythia, starring Mrs. Inchbald (and Kemble as Cyrus? – I must check the playbill). From then on he promoted masquerade balls at the Haymarket Theatre until the fire...

"Though moralists and clergymen protested, the 'carnavalesque' became a trend throughout London – its popularity resulting

from the aura of sexual danger and mystery, as women of pleasure were also constantly present," says the Curator. "A satire on Heidegger is published in *Masquerades and Operas* (in the Museum's collection) playing upon the masquerade's equal repute for its great popularity and immoral influences. During the coronation of King George II in Westminster Hall, Heidegger provided a spectacle by lighting 1800 candles in under three minutes. He had used a burnable connector that ran from candle to candle. According to Thomas Gray, the Queen and her ladies 'were in no small terror' as men set trains of flax alight and flames ran swiftly from candle to candle. The expiring flax fell in large flakes upon the heads of those beneath but did no harm. 'I was born,' Heidegger said, 'a Swiss, and came to England without a farthing, where I have found means to gain 5000 a year – and to spend it! Now I defy the ablest Englishman to go to Switzerland and either gain that income or spend it there.' And, I am certain, this sparked the Macbeth Riots..."

On the south wall, to the left of the large cast of Perseus and Andromeda, is a Roman relief of a griffin, the end panel of a sarcophagus, and over the door is a portrait medallion of Handel. (Handel settled in London when Rousseau was born and became a naturalised British subject the year Newton died, and

by this time, was strongly influenced by the great composers of the Italian Baroque and the middle-German polyphonic choral tradition.)

“It was Handel and Heidegger together that supplied the English nobility with Italian opera, but the public came to hear the vocal bravura of the soloists rather than the music.”¹⁰

Returning to the corridor and continuing westward, we find a series of arches, the walls of which are hung with antique fragments and plaster casts. In the first arch, the principal exhibits are: a plaster version of the Shield of Achilles, commissioned in the year of Marx’s birth, for presentation to George IV; a cupboard containing a human skeleton used in an artist’s studio; (on the left jamb of the arch) three torsos, Roman copies from Hellenistic originals, including a muse and

¹⁰ “The Elizabethan heritage of the public theatres perished in 1642...The Civil War broke out, the theatres were closed and remained closed until the Restoration of Charles II in 1660...During the eighteen years of dramatic sterility [William] Davenant, although an active royalist, knighted by the King after the siege of Gloucester, and more than once imprisoned, contrived to publish two plays before the Civil War was over. His last imprisonment was in the Tower on a charge of high treason, from which he was eventually released, possibly owing to the intervention of Milton, and by 1652 free to carry out his schemes for the production of a modified kind of play. It was an ingenious plan. The government was prepared to sanction musical entertainment provided it was elevating, and Davenant obtained permission to produce an ‘opera’, a new and inoffensive word to describe the declamation of verse ‘in recitative music’. And so, in 1656, the first English opera was staged at Rutland House, *The Siege of Rhodes*, the libretto by Davenant and music by Matthew Locke and Henry Lawes. But Davenant introduced more than Italian opera to the theatre-starved English; he presented women on the public stage for the first time, and contrived changes of scene with devices similar to those that had been developed by Inigo Jones in the Court masque...” [Halliday, The Cult of Shakespeare]

an athlete scraping himself – a classic example of hubris; (on the right jamb) a torso (of a season?) from the lid of a Niobid sarcophagus and a Roman copy of the torso of Dionysius. On the face of the pier is a fragment of a centaur from a Roman sarcophagus. In the second arch is an equestrian statue of George III in Roman costume. In the third arch is a sleeping child, the original in marble executed before Napoleon died, kept in Devon during the Blitz. On the face of the pier to left of this arch are two antique fragments: a part of a Roman frieze, probably from the Domus Augustiana, and a male torso in Black Basalt.

Chapter 8
(Imaginary Frissons)

To the left, the corridor now opens into the crypt, so called because this room was originally lined with three tiers of box-like recesses containing cinerary urns. It was then top-lit, but altered when the ground floor anteroom was formed, in this case, when [Groucho] Marx was born. It now contains a Roman altar of the 2nd century A.D. dedicated to Hercules. To the left, a group of five portrait busts of the Imperial period; on the shelf there is a giant hand holding a scroll and a small seated figure of Jupiter. Against the south wall, three cinerary urns of the 1st or 2nd century A.D.; that on the right was formerly in the collection of Piranesi.

"He opposed the *Vedutisti*, the "view makers", such as Canaletto and Bellotto, who preferred sunlit places to his dark aggregates of monumental architecture and ruin," explains the Curator. "While in Rome, just before leaving for Catania and Biscari Palace, I bought a folio of etches, the second

edition (published in the same year as the *Social Contract*), from Piranesi himself.¹¹ At the Three Day Reception of Belzoni's sarcophagus), De Quincey (who was quite drunk) said to me: 'Many years ago, when I was looking over Piranesi's *Antiquities of Rome*, Mr. Coleridge (standing between us at the time), described to me a set of plates by that artist which record the scenery of his own visions during the delirium of a fever: some of them, I describe only from memory of Mr. Coleridge's account' [said De Quincey], 'representing vast Gothic halls, on the floor of which stood all sorts of engines and machinery, wheels, cables, pulleys, levers, catapults, etc., etc., expressive of enormous power put forth, and resistance overcome. Creeping along the sides of the walls, you perceived a staircase; and upon it, groping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself: follow the stairs a little further, and you perceive it come to a sudden abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him.'"

¹¹ This folio included: I - Title Plate; II - The Man on the Rack; III - The Round Tower; IV - The Grand Piazza; V - The Lion Bas-Reliefs; VI - The Smoking Fire; VII - The Drawbridge; VIII - The Staircase with Trophies; IX - The Giant Wheel; X - Prisoners on a Projecting Platform; XI - The Arch with a Shell Ornament; XII - The Sawhorse; XIII - The Well; XIV - The Gothic Arch; XV - The Pier with a Lamp; XVI - The Pier with Chains. The original prints were 16" x 21". Numbers I through IX were all done in portrait format, while X to XVI were landscape.

In the corners of the room, to left and right, there are two pivoted panels carved in relief with theatrical masks and other stage motifs.

"Similar panels have been found at Pompeii, where they served as ventilation openings," says the Curator.

On the floor, there are sundry fragments of Roman candelabra; also, two torsos – that on the left is a Roman copy of the kneeling Niobid from the famous Niobid group; the other is a Roman copy of the Dancing Satyr from the group called 'Invitation to the Dance'. On the window shelf on the right are three Egyptian objects. At centre, there is a reconstruction of a chest for feline canopic jars, of which one corner is original (XIXth Dynasty); to the left and right, there are Egyptian stelai (XXIInd Dynasty). On the south wall, over the cinerary urns, is a terra-cotta relief of Aurora in her chariot (English, 18th century?), while on brackets to left and right of the opening into the Museum is another bust of Kemble.

Chapter 9
(The Three-Day Reception)

Adjoining the catacombs and visible through the glazed panels of the door at the end of the corridor is the Nude Courtyard, so called because it was taken into the Museum when the steam room and sauna were built, after the Curator's visit to Finland. The objects here were moved from other parts of the Museum at that time. The most important is the large pilaster capital up against the far wall, which is one of the original capitals from Inigo Jones's Banqueting House in Whitehall, removed when Proudhon first met Fourier (in Besançon) and the Curator restored and refaced the building.

"The principal mason was Nicholas Stone, can you believe, whose notebooks are in the Museum collection, who also carved the Portland stone piers (in the form of Doric columns on pedestals for Holland House), designed by Inigo Jones. I was born the son of a bricklayer and Stendhal's hero as well."

"You mean, a carpenter?"

Among the various fragments grouped with the capital are two obelisks, which formerly served as lampposts. In the centre of the court is a lead cistern taken from The Castle of Otranto.

Continuing now to the right, we see at the end of the west corridor, standing against the wall, the wooden lid of an Egyptian coffin carved with a bearded face and wig with lappets (XIXth-XXth Dynasty). Opening to the left is the sauna with its colossal bronze head of Jupiter.

In the centre of the floor is a stand displaying cork models of Greek and Roman buildings, including the three Doric temples at Paestum; the columns of the three temples mounted together; the columns of the Temple of Vespasian...

"Jupiter Tonans."

...before excavation; the tombs of a pair of male triplets, the Horatii and Curiatii, near Albano; and the Temple of Fortuna Virilis, Rome. In front of the window are five cases containing fragments of the lid of the Belzoni sarcophagus.

"Against the north wall is a cast of an Elizabethan chimney-piece, formerly in the Palace of Westminster and now in the picture gallery at St. James's Palace. Within the opening are fragments of medieval and Jacobean woodwork, of unknown provenance."

Returning now eastwards, we enter the main part of the crypt, which is called the Belzoni Gymnasium. Here, the crypt opens into the upper part of the Museum and is lit from the skylight of the 'Dome'.

"All this portion was built in the year fire destroyed Covent Garden Theatre (or was it the Haymarket?). It is the earliest of the buildings now comprising the Museum."

At the entry to the Gymnasium is an alabaster cinerary urn raised on a column, bearing an inscription identifying it as the receptacle for the remains of a Roman patrician (of the early Imperial period).

"Here stands the sarcophagus of Seti I, one of the principal treasures of the Museum. It was discovered in October, in the dramatic year of Elba and Saint Helena, by Giovanni Battista Belzoni, (a Freemason, strongman, and amateur archaeologist)

who was excavating the tomb under the patronage of Henry Salt and other Englishmen interested in the exploration of the great Necropolis of Thebes. Belzoni believed the sarcophagus was not a tomb, but a Masonic temple, 'in which Seti was wearing a triangular Masonic apron, and the scenes on the walls depicted initiation ceremonies' (to quote a scholar). I purchased the tomb after Napoleon died; yet, this story is too well known... In honour of its acquisition, for three consecutive evenings, during a year of relative calm, the ground floor and basement were illuminated by candles and oil-lamps hired, at considerable cost, from a stained-glass manufacturer, for the enormous sum of £2,000. The outside of the house was also illuminated by means of more lamps than Heidegger provided for the coronation of King George II!"

"The brochure says 256 lamps," I say. "Heidegger provided 1800..."

"And more than 890 invitation cards were printed and the guests were served with cakes and tea or coffee. The servants were given ale and porter (although the guests also indulged in the latter)."

In the space surrounding the sarcophagus are various antique fragments: cinerary urns (late 1st or 2nd century A.D.); a stature of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias (copy of a cult statue of the later Imperial period); head of the Emperor Hadrian, from a large official relief; Cupid and Psyche, fragment from a sarcophagus of the later Imperial period; and a Running Amazon, from of frieze composition (late 5th or early 4th century B.C.).

Leaving the Gymnasium we pass eastwards into a dark part of the crypt, what the Curator said is the 'Egyptian Crypt, the ceiling of which is composed of massive blocks of stone' (rebuilt). Standing in the arch is a figure of a sleeping cupid, part of a Roman fountain (2nd century A.D.). On our left is a triple recess, through which light filters from above. In the centre compartment of this recess is a cast referred to as 'The Crouching Venus'. It is interesting that the plaster is painted black to make it look like a large bronze.

"I link this cast with the Vatican version which has a bare right arm," says the Curator, "whereas the Uffizi version of the Medicis wore a bracelet."

In the other compartments are wooden models for parts of the Curator's tomb on Elba, while on the wall of the right-hand compartment are memorial tablets to the Curator's wife and eldest son. In the south corner is a headless figure of a seated muse.

To the left and right, in the eastern arch leading to the staircase, are casts of the Venus di Medici (Uffizi Gallery, Florence) and the Venus at the Bath (Vatican). Adjoining these casts are fluted shafts over which are placed Corinthian capitals from the ruins of the Villa of Hadrian at Tivoli (2nd century A.D.). Over these again are 18th century wooden pilaster capitals from a building demolished by the Curator.

"We are now back at the foot of the crypt's staircase. At the top, we reach the principal floor and that part of the building which I consider my favorite."

Chapter 10

(A Table Leg)

The colonnade is designed in a highly original way. Ten Corinthian columns serve to support the floor of the student dormitory, which, as previously noted, does not come into contact with the main walls. Light is, therefore, admitted from above, on either side, as well as from the dome and from the window looking into the courtyard.

"The effect in this part," says the Curator, "is rather solemn than gloomy, and the pictorial breaks of light and shade will be duly appreciated by the students and lovers of art. The colonnade and adjoining south passage contain a variety of objects, chiefly antique fragments but including also sculptures and architectural models in cork."

On the east wall, to the left of opening are two frames containing fragments of Roman terra-cotta architectural reliefs; to the right, there is a fragment of a Roman imitation of an Attic relief and, below it, a relief, perhaps Roman, of a fleece hanging on a tree.

On either side, between columns, are the cupboards provided by the Curator for the reception of drawings. On these cupboards are restored models of two recumbent figures from the Elgin marbles brought to Britain after the Napoleonic Wars.

"Shouldn't the Marbles be returned to Athens?" I ask.

"The Duveen Gallery was purpose built to display them."

To the south, there is a pair of statues in plaster: Hercules holding Cerberus and Aesculapius, which is a Roman variation of a Greek original formerly in the collection of Cardinal Polignac. On the north side, there is the lovely Ephesian Diana. The torso only is antique.

"This statue, incorporating the remains of a Roman copy of a famous Greek temple image, was known as far back as the middle of the 16th century when it was in the collection of Cardinal Rudolfo Pio," says the Curator. "Within the pedestal of the Diana is a Roman table leg."

Behind the Diana are two fragments of Greek 4th century B.C. sepulchral reliefs and above them plaster models of Michelangelo's 'Twilight' and 'Day' in the Medici Chapel. To the right, there is the shaft of a Roman fountain with vestiges of the figure of a nymph.

"She held a seashell."

On the north wall, in the east bay, there is (high up) a votive relief to Fortuna, dedicated by a Roman knight. Contiguous to it, there is a figure of Paris from a Roman sarcophagus, the end of a Roman sarcophagus with griffin and a Roman female mask from a fountain or bath. In the west bay, there is a fragment of a Roman relief panel with a figure of Hermes.

In the window recess is a drawing chest, on which is a cork model of an Etruscan tomb at Corneto. Above this is a plaster model by a sculptor, the year fire destroyed Covent Garden Theatre (or was it Drury?), for the same statue commissioned by the City of Glasgow.

On the east wall of the window-recess is the torso of a statuette after the Doriphorus of Polycleitos. On the west wall are two fragments of the lost relief decoration of Trajan's Forum in Rome. On the north side of the passage are a plaster model of the Laocoön and numerous antique fragments including (at floor level) two enriched tripod bases and a fragment of a marble vase decorated with four dancing amorini.

"Proceeding westward, we pass from the half-lit colonnade into the brightly lit portion of the Museum known as the Dome, lighted from the roof, and marked in its architectural decoration by a rich variety of outline and classical ornaments from the antique. Here, I am always transported back to Catania..."

Chapter 11

(The Dome)

"The Dome is the oldest part of the Museum, having been built as a 'model room' in the year fire destroyed a theatre (Kemble could no longer answer for himself) annexed to my office at the back of No. 12. There is not, strictly speaking, a dome, though pendentives – *If the diameter of the dome is equal to one side of the square, the area of the square will not be covered; if it is equal to the diagonal of the sides, the dome will project beyond the sides, etc., etc.* – bring the square central space to a circle which, in turn, is covered by a conical skylight. This central space connects with the crypt, the opening from the one to the other being protected by a balustrade, upon which stand a number of busts and vases. On the piers of the dome and on all the surrounding walls is a great variety of objects, including antique fragments, casts and some works by my contemporaries."

As we enter the Dome from the colonnade we see at the further end the cast of the Apollo Belvedere.

"This was made for Lord B— and placed in his Chiswick villa. During some alterations at the villa under the 5th Duke of Devonshire, the cast was given to a Mr. White, who, in turn, presented it to me. I set so much value upon it," says the Curator, "as to take down a large portion of the external wall in order to admit it into its present position."

Directly opposite the Apollo and standing on the balustrade is a marble bust of the Curator, presented to him by his friend, a renowned sculptor, on the completion of Stendhal's Le Rouge et le noir.

"I began sitting for this on a Thursday, when the artist wrote to me on a Tuesday: 'Will you come to me in two days time and bring your Head with you?' The bust was finished when Proudhon first met Fourier. 'Whether the bust shall be considered like you or Julius Caesar,' my friend wrote, 'is a point that cannot be determined by either of us. I will, however, maintain that as a work of art I have never produced a better.' I was able to return the compliment by designing an anteroom for the artist at his house in Belgravia."

The bust stands on a lion-headed pedestal, on either side of which are statuettes of Michelangelo and Raphael, models for statuettes made for a painter on the death of Thomas Jefferson. They came to the Museum as a gift from the sculptor's (not the author of the Curator's bust, but another) sister-in-law, Miss D-, immediately after the Curator's death (along with a tacky seated studio skeleton, now removed) and were placed here according to a wish he had expressed to associate the work of the artists. The painter, too, shares in the association, for a plaster copy of the bust by an artist, sadly, "who did not take to sculpture until he was 30 and abandoned it before he was 50." It is seen high up in an opening from the student dormitory.

Of the many classical prizes displayed in this part of the Museum, the cinerary vases are mainly antique but heavily restored in the 18th century. They were acquired at different times at the sales of the various collections. The busts are, likewise, largely restorations; an exception however is the over-life-size bust of a lady of the 1st century A.D. (perhaps a member of the Julio-Claudian imperial family?) on the south balustrade. Below the west balustrade is a large Roman sarcophagus panel. Among various marble and terracotta

fragments fixed to the west wall piers are two fragments of sculptured sarcophagus fronts.

In the centre of the north wall there is a portion of a small figured frieze (other fragments of the same frieze are in the Vatican Museum). Below this, there is a panel of scroll-ornament (Italian 15th century). Below again, there is a portion of a small frieze and architrave; and, to the right, a large cornucopia, probably part of a life-size female statue from Hadrian's Villa.

On the south wall, to the left, there is a terra-cotta 'campana' plaque.

On either side of the east wall in the centre opening are two cinerary urns. That on the right, heavily restored, was in the collection of Piranesi. Behind the Apollo is a small lobby that, until the erection of the new Wild addition, was merely a recess lined with bookcases. In the pedestal of the Apollo is a small folding table, which runs out on castors.

To the left and right of this lobby are bookcases, part of the collection of a continental theorist, of which there are others in the south drawing room. On either side of the arch

opening into the new Wild addition are small works by a sculptor. On the left: Mercury Conveying Pandora to Epimetheus (designed as a relief for a vase to commemorate the Battle of Trafalgar).

"On the right, there are three self-portraits: (a), me at the age of 14, from the year Napoleon was born; (b), me at the age of 24, before my "Grand Tour"; (c), me at the age of 34, to mark the Louisiana Purchase Treaty; and the space to the side is for a fourth, not yet begun..."

END OF PART I