



Poetry.

FORGIVE!

By all the turmoil thou hast felt
Within thy tempted breast,
When fiery passions strove to melt
God's image there impress'd;

Select Tales.

From Eliza Cook's Journal.

THE SCULPTOR'S CAREER.

I.—BEGINNINGS.

We are about to relate in the following
pages the true story of an artist—one of
the very greatest that England has yet
produced.

A customer entered the little shop one
day. He was an elderly man, mild, bene-
volent, and gentle-looking—seeming by
his dress to be a clergyman.

The master of the place might be ob-
served, through a glass door which separ-
ated the little back room from the front
shop, busily engaged in moulding a figure
of one of the new popular men of the day.

Mr. Mathews was as good as his word.
He brought several books to the little
boy; amongst others, Homer and Don
Quixote, in both of which the youth
ever after took immense delight.

The door was opened by a waiting-man,
who gazed with surprise at the boy when
he told his errand—that he had come to
the party.

and with the stucco Ajaxes and Achilles-
es about him, looming along the shop
shelves, the ambition took possession of
him, that he too would design and em-
body in poetic forms these majestic heroes.

The soul of our cripple invalid was the
soul of a true genius, and behind the shop-
counter it obtained its first impulse to-
wards art.

A beautiful thing it is, Mr. Mathews,
said the man; "beautiful indeed—a
very gem. Yes, I will mend it while
you stay.

"No, I will wait," said Mr. Mathews;
and thereupon the image maker retired in-
to the back apartment to proceed with
the work.

The youth raised himself up on his
crutches, bowed and said, "Sir, it is a
Latin book, and I am trying to learn it."

"Well, now," continued his mother, "I
must have your face washed, and your
pretty hair brushed, and your Sunday
clothes put on; for you are going to meet
ladies at a party, you know."

God tempers the wind to the shorn
lamb," it is said, and truly. You had but
to watch the sparkle of that boy's bright
eye, and the blush that mantled his cheek,

"Wait in the lobby, my boy—there may
be some mistake;" and he an up stairs to
the drawing-room, where were Mrs. Mon-
tagne, Mrs. Chapone, and Mrs. Barbauld,
with the lady of the house. The servant
explained his message.

Many a delightful evening—for long
years after remembered by John Flaxman
with pleasure and affection and gratitude
—did the young artist spend by the fire-
side of Mrs. Mathews and her kind-heart-
ed husband.

A beautiful picture this of the accom-
plished woman turning aside from the glit-
tering society in which she had her allot-
ted place, to devote her evenings to the
intellectual culture of a poor, illiterate,
unknown plaster-cast-seller's boy!

One day, the boy had been rambling in
the parks—for a sudden flush of health
came upon him about his tenth year,
which enabled him to throw aside his
crutches—and on his return, his mother
sprang to meet him.

"Well, now," continued his mother, "I
must have your face washed, and your
pretty hair brushed, and your Sunday
clothes put on; for you are going to meet
ladies at a party, you know."

The boy found patrons and helpers, too.
Some of the visitors at Mrs. Mathews',
greatly admiring his designs after Homer,
desired to possess some drawings by the
same hand; and Mr. Crutchley, of Sun-
ning-hill Park, gave him a commission to
draw a set for him in black chalk.

The door was opened by a waiting-man,
who gazed with surprise at the boy when
he told his errand—that he had come to
the party.

Still he went on studying. His kind
friend Mr. Mathews guarded him against
indulgence in vanity—that besetting sin
of clever youths—but Flaxman knew too
well his own defects, and he relaxed not in
his labors, but only applied himself more
closely than before.

And so saying, the little visitor, John
Flaxman, was ushered into the drawing-
room.

IL.—PROGRESS.

Of course, everybody prophesied that
young Flaxman would carry off the gold
medal; and there was no student who, for
ability and industry, was to be compared
with him; and when his candidature for the
medal was known, all his fellow-students
shouted out in one voice, "Flaxman!
Flaxman!" as if none but he was worthy
to win the prize.

The old man sprang up at the sound of
his footsteps, and ran to meet him. The
boy's face was downcast, and even paler
than usual.

"Well, John, what of the medal?"
"I have lost it, father."

Flaxman was really of service to him—
Defeats do not cast down the resolute-
hearted, but only serve to call forth their
power of will and resolution. He dou-
bled his efforts—spared no pains with
himself—designed and modelled incessant-
ly, and labored diligently and persevering-
ly in the work of self-improvement.

But poverty threatened the household
of his poor father, the profits of whose
trade, at that day by no means remuner-
ative, but barely served to "keep the wolf
from the door." So the youth was under
the necessity of curtailing his hours of
study in order to devote a larger portion
of his time to the bread-and-cheese depart-
ment. He laid aside his Homer and took
up his plaster trowel.

The enterprising Josiah Wedgwood
was a most energetic man, possessed of
great public spirit. He desired to push
his trade, and while he benefited himself
he also sought to improve the public taste.

"Well, my lad," said he to him, "I
have heard that you are a good draughts-
man and a clever designer. I'm a pot
manufacturer—name, Wedgwood. Now
I want you to design some models for me
—nothing fantastic, you know, but simple,
tasteful, and correct in drawing. I'll pay
you well. Do you understand? You don't
think the work beneath you? Eh?"

And the kind gentleman bustled out of
the shop as he had come in.

Flaxman did his best. By the time that
Mr. Wedgwood next called upon him, he
had a numerous series of models prepared
for various pieces of earthen ware. They
consisted chiefly of small groups in very
low relief—the subjects taken from ancient
verse and history. Many of them are still
in existence, and some are equal in beau-
ty and simplicity to his after designs for
marble.

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ly in the work of self-improvement.

Engaged in such labors as these, for se-
veral years Flaxman executed but few
works of art, and then at rare intervals.
He lived a quiet, secluded, and simple life,
working during the day and sketching and
reading in the evenings.

At length, in the year 1782, when
twenty-seven years of age, he quitted his
father's roof and rented a small house and
studio in Wardour Street, Soho; and, what
was more, he married a wife—an event
which proved to him of no small conse-
quence, as we shall find from the events
in his future history.

Flaxman had been married but a few
weeks, when one day he returned home to
his young wife, full of sadness at heart.
There was a cloud on his brow, so unusu-
al, that she at once proceeded to inquire
into the cause. Flaxman sat down beside
her, took her hand, and said, with a smile:

"Oh! he firmly believes it, I can as-
sure you. Sir Joshua thinks no man can
be a great artist, unless he visits Rome;
and educates his taste by a contemplation
of the great models of antiquity. He is
constantly telling the students of the Acad-
emy that if they would excel, they must
bring the whole powers of their mind to
bear upon their art, from the moment they
rise until they go to bed."

"What! and leave no room, no corner
for the affections! Don't believe him;
John; don't be cast down. You are a
true artist, and you will be a great one."

"I will tell you how. Work and econ-
omize. If you will leave the latter to
me, we shall soon be able to spare the
means for a visit to Rome—and together,
mind! Ann Denham must go and look
after her ruined artist."

And she shook her curls, and gave one
of her bright, hearty laughs.

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