The next two letters may have been written in 1860 when Hunt was putting the finishing touches to *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*. The letter I have placed first could, of course, have been written at any of those times Ruskin visited the artist's studio to see works in progress—1853, 1859-60 and 1882—but I have tentatively assigned it to 1860 on the admittedly slight evidence of the closing, which occurs frequently at this period though only rarely afterwards.

[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.]

Dear Hunt

Can you let me have a look at your picture if I come on Tuesday afternoon about ½ past three!—If you are not to be at home just send me a line. If you are to be at home—say nothing.

Always yours affectionately

J Ruskin

The next letter, which can be assigned with some confidence to 1860, was written to break an appointment—perhaps the one contained in the previous letter. Hunt exhibited paintings in galleries on Bond Street several times, but Ruskin had seen *The Triumph of the Innocents* while in the studio and there is no evidence that he saw *The Shadow of Death*, which he never mentions in his writings, or that he had any contact with the artist during the 1870s. One can therefore assume that he wrote this letter in April 1860, when Hunt had completed *The Finding* and it was exhibited at the German Gallery, 168 New Bond Street.

[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.]

Dear Hunt

I can't get over to Kensington today—it's no use looking at such a picture in a hurry. I'll take it bit by bit in Bond St.

Always affectionately Yours

J Ruskin

1 The first part of this article appeared in the preceding number of the BULLETIN.
Despite the fact that he had followed the progress of the picture, Ruskin never discussed *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* at length, and, indeed, his only public mention of it appears in the last volume of *Modern Painters* (1860), when he told how the painter had to "fight his way through all neglect and obloquy to the painting of the Christ in the Temple" (7. 451). This neglect of a painting which so embodies a Ruskinian programme provides one of the most striking ironies of Ruskin's relationship to Hunt and his art. First of all, Hunt's picture fulfilled the Ruskinian requirement that a sacred art suited to Victorian times would have to use realism in the service of myth and older imaginative creations. In the third volume of *Modern Painters* (1856), he had asserted that "sacred art, so far from being exhausted, has yet to attain the development of its highest branches; and the task, or privilege, yet remains for mankind, to produce an art which shall be at once entirely skilful and entirely sincere. All the histories of the Bible are, in my judgement, yet waiting to be painted" (5. 86-87). Ruskin then argued that Pre-Raphaelite studies from nature would provide the foundations for a truly imaginative sacred realism. The painter's letters and diaries show that he was committed to precisely this kind of artistic programme, and yet Ruskin never commented publicly upon the fact. Had the picture seen completion within a year of Hunt's return from Jerusalem, Ruskin, one can surmise, would have devoted extensive time and energy to explaining its meaning, but he lost his religious belief in 1858, after which he experienced several extremely painful years of spiritual anguish. Unfortunately for Hunt, he completed the picture that was to have fulfilled the realistic part of the Ruskinian programme just at the point when the critic had little interest in such matters.

A second major irony in Ruskin's neglect of *The Finding* appears in the fact that it was precisely this work which used typological symbolism to unify realism and elaborate iconography. In other words, this painting about which Ruskin had so little to say embodied his own arguments about the way typology could endow realism with a deeper spiritual meaning. What is more, Hunt employs precisely the typological image—the stone neglected by the builders—which Ruskin had discussed in his
explication of Tintoretto's Scuola di San Rocco Annunciation. The artist had begun The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple upon his arrival in Jerusalem but soon discovered that the difficulties of procuring Jewish models would not permit its completion. He then turned to The Scapegoat, a painting which makes a far less effective use of typology, and after his return to England he worked whenever possible at his version of Christ's dispute with the doctors. But once he completed the work which came to represent an entire school of sacred realism for the contemporary critics, he received no public support from the man whose ideas it had embodied so successfully.

Ruskin's only extended discussion of the picture appears in a letter he wrote to the children at Winnington Hall, which Van Akin Burd assigns to September 1860. There Ruskin admitted:

I can't tell you what to look for in Hunt's picture. There are some things I don't like—others I don't understand in it. I never venture to speak about it: in many ways it is admirable—and you had better all admire it—as much as you can—unbiassed for or against. I should like much to know what you think of it.

I don't mind telling you this much—that I don't believe Christ ever spoke to a person—least of all to his mother—without wholly thinking of them. He never was thinking of something else—I mean—humanly considering Him.

This is my chief fault with the picture, a radical one to my mind.  

(Winnington Letters, pp. 264-5)

Ruskin's loss of belief seems to have prevented his recognition that Hunt was portraying the very moment at which the young Saviour first perceived His own mission—His moment of illumination and recognition. Hunt, in other words, had brilliantly combined the old sacred subjects of Christ's dispute with the doctors and the Annunciation to Mary, thus creating a Protestant version of the Annunciation theme. But the critic who had lost his faith found little to engage him in this painting, and one can surmise from other evidence that he was unwilling to pay much attention to religious symbolism at this point in his life. Hunt himself relates that when the two men visited the Scuola di San Rocco together in 1869, he was surprised that his friend concentrated entirely on the formal qualities of the Tintorettos Annunciation. Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood tells that he pointed out to Ruskin “when we were dwelling
on the pictures, your interest was in the aesthetic qualities of the works alone. Was this because, having previously dwelt on the symbolism, you felt free to treat of the painter-like excellence of Tintoretto’s labours only? According to Hunt, his question prompted a confession of aggressive atheism from the critic, who told him: “I am led to regard the whole story of divine revelation as a mere wilderness of poetic dreaming, and, since it is proved to be so, it is time that all men of any influence should denounce the superstition which tends to destroy the exercise of reason. . . . The conviction that I have arrived at leads me to conclude that there is no Eternal Father to whom we can look up, that man has no helper but himself” (ii. 265). Hunt then spends ten more pages detailing his arguments with Ruskin, ending with the fact that when the two men met a decade later in London Ruskin told him that he was a believer once more. But at the time Hunt completed *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, the critic was in no frame of mind to appreciate Christian belief in either life or art.

Since their relationship cooled and the two men began to drift apart sometime about 1860, one can assume that Hunt’s disappointment at Ruskin’s lack of public support for his work did much to separate them. Certainly, the annulment of Ruskin’s marriage with Effie and her subsequent union with Millais did not, as one might expect, drive the two men apart. Despite his closeness to Millais, whose letters to Hunt accuse Ruskin of madness and cruelty, the artist managed to remain friendly with both. The editors of the Library Edition only comment that “with Holman Hunt, Ruskin’s friendship, formed at the same time [as that with Millais], was enduring, though the painter’s long absences in the East, and perhaps some other things, caused interruptions” (36. lii). *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* explains these “other things” in one of Hunt’s reconstructed conversations. According to the artist, while the men were dining at Danielli’s Ruskin frankly inquired why they had parted ways.

My return was, “My dear Ruskin, you know there were reasons for a time to obstruct our intimacy, but beyond that I would say, you always seemed to me to forget that every man’s father is not behind him with a fortune that enables
him to do what he would with his time; yet I confess that I might of late have stolen some occasions to see such a friend as you, had there not been further difficulties... I may be quite wrong in my estimate of some of the characters who formed the band of men you had about you, but in my eyes they were so distinctly a bar to me, that, had you been the Archangel Michael himself, these satellites would have kept me away.” (ii. 264)

To these words, says Hunt, his newly rediscovered friend replied, “You are quite right, Holman, I never was a good judge of character, and I have had some most objectionable people about me” (ii. 264). Derrick Leon interpreted this admission as a reference to Rossetti and Howell, and it seems likely that he is quite correct. After his return from Palestine, Egypt and Syria Hunt had been angry to learn of Rossetti’s philandering with Annie Miller, the girl he himself had planned to marry, and yet this discovery does not seem to have driven the men completely apart. In fact, it seems to have been Rossetti, not Hunt, who finally broke off the friendship, refusing to see his Pre-Raphaelite brother. A cynical interpretation would have it, therefore, that Holman Hunt remained friendly with Ruskin only because he needed his valuable public support, while a more charitable reading would find that Hunt’s bitter disappointment at discovering Ruskin’s insensitivity to his creation of a Ruskinian art finally drove him apart from the author of *Modern Painters*.

One does not know precisely when this began, or how long it existed, since, unlike his long relationship with F. G. Stephens, that with Ruskin does not seem to have been terminated by a quarrel and series of angry letters. In fact, with the exception of a letter accompanying one Hunt was forwarding to Ruskin from a shared acquaintance in 1864, I have discovered only one brief note written by either man between 1860 and 1880—that arranging the visit to the Scuola di San Rocco in 1869. Nevertheless, we must be quite cautious about assuming that their friendship was interrupted for such a long period, for there is some evidence that they became intimate once again after their encounter in Venice. Hunt voyaged to the East in 1869, remaining there at work on *The Shadow of Death* until late 1872, and he spent 1875-8 there again, so the men did not have much time to see each other. Nevertheless, Ruskin’s long letter to
James Anthony Froude, which the editors of the Library Edition assign to 1874, shows a detailed interest and knowledge of the painter’s recent career suggesting he and Hunt might have met more recently than 1869 (37. 82-83). If some of the letters which are obviously missing turn up, we might discover that the men exchanged ideas long before the resumption of their friendship in 1880.

The following letter, whose closing lines suggest that the two men were no longer on very intimate terms, accompanied one from Henry Wentworth Monk (1827-96), the Canadian pacifist, zionist and advocate of world government he had first met ten years before in Jerusalem while at work on *The Scapegoat*. Monk, who firmly believed that he had come to fulfil divine prophecy, proposed to turn Palestine into a Garden of Eden and thus bring on the millennium promised by the scriptures. The Canadian seems to have followed him back to London, where Hunt took care of him and painted the portrait which is now in Ottawa. I have not located the letters Monk sent to Hunt and Ruskin in 1864, but the Huntington Library contains one he sent to the artist on 28 March 1871 from Montgomery, in Orange County, New York. Monk, who mentions that he had earlier written to Ruskin, tells Hunt:

I want you to be prepared for the great *Scientific Revolutions* I am about to astonish the world with—I intend to visit London, England, early this summer;—I shall then see what prospect there is of getting my contemplated monthly Paper (“*Our Future*”) under weigh immediately. ... I think “the Holy Land” of Christendom, and the World, is a much more suitable place from which to issue a monthly of such... interest as “*Our Future*” will be. ... Besides, the prophecy in ‘the Scriptures of Truth’ declares that ... *the word of the Lord* [shall go forth] *from Jerusalem*’ and if I don’t utter ‘*the word of the Lord*’ in truth and righteousness, let some one tell us where the man breathes who does—I consider that it was designed by Providence that I should serve God faithfully, without any reservation whatever, all alone, for eighteen years,—that my years of service might correspond with the Centuries of Christendom’s trials.

Monk wished to have everyone to contribute 1 per cent of his net income to his project, which he was certain would produce universal peace “and at the same time place *Theology upon a Scientific basis*”.

My dear Ruskin,

I forward to you a letter from Monk which he sent together with one to me of the same kind. He left this open and desired me to read it, principally I suppose that I might be convinced that he [is] setting to work vigorously to appeal generally to his favourites for their support. It is very flattering to be among the small number of those he considers worthiest in the world to establish a new kingdom on perfect principles, but unhappily I am not single enough in my reliance upon the other world or in my faith in those interpreters of its meaning whose words he quotes to be induced to throw aside my ordinary judgment and join him. My experience teaches me, if I am not deceiving myself, that Man and the World must go on in much more gradual stages towards perfection than he thinks, and that we must not look to miraculous interposition on the part of Providence either in our private or public difficulties. On the other hand I must say that he seems to me perfectly logical in his conclusions, when his premises are granted—when I say perfectly logical I am making too great allowances for the chance of my being satisfied of certain difficult notions he has if I gave attention to them such as I have occasionally given to others which at first seemed as difficult and afterwards appeared reasonable. Then there is the fact that he is a man of extraordinary goodness, of great genius, of the most evident sincerity and of wonderful unselfishness. These qualities make me like the poor fellow and take an interest in his career. So when I refuse to listen to him and prefer to go on in my own blind way I think I prove I am not made of the stuff for an apostle unless in those times of the original apostles reason and affection both directed men to throw aside all and follow their master. If I did not admire this enthusiast I should not bother you further than by sending his note.

I hear you are back in England. I hope you are well.

Yours ever

W Holman Hunt

The next extant portion of the correspondence between the two men is a brief note arranging their famous visit to see the Scuola di San Rocco together. Ruskin’s diaries do not even mention this encounter, and, at any rate, his diaries during this trip are rather sketchy, since he was using his letters to his cousin Joan Agnew Severn as a journal. These letters, now at the Ruskin Galleries, Bembridge School, Isle of Wight, relate Ruskin’s joy at discovering that “this Venice of mine is far less injured than I feared, and much of it, just as it was and I have had far more pleasure in it than I expected. . . . The air is soft as balm. I am going to see my old favourite Tintoret”
(11 May 1869). It is not clear if Ruskin in fact went to the Scuola at this time or just went to see some other paintings by the artist before setting out for Verona. On 31 July 1869 Ruskin wrote Joan from Venice that "Saturn has always his way, and I am always just too late—in so many things—I find Holman Hunt here—just leaving for the East—but I may succeed in keeping him a little". Unfortunately for anyone interested in this crucial encounter between the two men, Ruskin at this time was greatly concerned about an accident in which Mrs. Severn and an unidentified child were involved. His worry about this matter may have prevented his discussion of the details of his encounter with Hunt. *Diaries*, ii. 669, suggests that this note was written on 1 July 1869, and that Ruskin had succeeded in detaining the painter in Venice for a few days.

26

[Rylands Eng. MS. 1216/69]

Dear Hunt

Instead of coming to the Hotel—I will send my boat to bring you to the Scuola San Rocco—just knock at the door—and there we are and I'll go anywhere with you.

Ever yours affectionately

JR

The boat will be at the Albergo at ½ past eleven.

The next letter, which opens our epistolary record of the late phase of the Hunt–Ruskin relationship, was written from Ruskin's home in the Lake District. The letter is dated only "22nd Feb", but it can be confidently assigned to 1880, the year Hunt began the second version of *The Triumph of the Innocents* when the surface of the first appeared impossible to salvage. The lecture to which Ruskin refers is thus not that in *The Art of England* which discusses Hunt's picture but one given in response to T. H. Huxley's views of evolution. The tone of the following letter suggests that the men had once more become close friends, and Holman Hunt certainly needed friendship and moral support at this point in his career, for he was not only engaged in the difficult struggle to complete *The Triumph of the Innocents*, a struggle which continued for another half a dozen years, but he had also seen the end of two of his most intimate friendships. John Lucas Tupper, a friend to
whom the artist had always been able to express his most intimate beliefs about religion and art, had recently died, and after a long period of mutual resentments he and F. G. Stephens, one of the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, were building up to a final quarrel. Stephens had somewhat innocently been the original cause of Hunt's great difficulties with his version of the Flight into Egypt. Accepting the responsibility for shipping the painter's canvas and other supplies to Jerusalem, he unfortunately repacked the various parcels in one extremely large, unwieldy crate whose size long delayed its shipment, and the result was that the despairing Hunt had to wait many months for it to arrive. He finally began to paint his picture on some linen purchased locally, but, sadly, it was not strong enough to use for a large work, and no matter what he did it stretched and buckled. Every time he thought he had finished some portion of the picture, he found it had wrinkled and all attempts at remedying the situation only made things worse. He came to believe that the Devil himself was behind his difficulties. When he wrote to Tupper on 5 July 1878 that relining to correct the defective surface "would not be practicable. . . . The Devil is too ingenious to be so easily beaten" (Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.), he might only have been using a figure of speech; but he in fact insisted to William Bell Scott that he had been visited by Satan himself. On Christmas Eve, 1879 Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote Theodore Watts Dunton: "Holman Hunt all but say the Devil on Xmas Day! He heard him holloa!! This is true." (Rossetti Letters, iv. 1694). In a letter of 5 January 1880, which Scott prints, Hunt explained that his many difficulties with The Triumph of the Innocents were those "which the Father of Mischief himself only could contrive". He relates how when painting on Christmas morning, he suddenly felt he would succeed: "I said to myself half aloud, 'I think I have beaten the devil!' and stepped down, when the whole building shook with a convulsion, seemingly immediately behind my easel, as if a great creature were shaking itself and running between me and the door. . . . I went back to my work really rather cheered by the grotesque suggestion that came into my mind that the commotion was the evil one departing. . . . The
question to me is not whether there was a devil or not, but whether that noise was opportune, for I still hope that the wicked one was defeated on Christmas morning about half-past one.” (Autobiographical Notes, ed. W. Minto (London, 1892), ii. 230-31). It is this belief on which Ruskin comments near the beginning of his letter.

[Huntington MS. Uncat LF.] Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire. 22nd Feb[ruary].

My dearest Hunt

I am partly grieved but much more glad, that you began this new picture—I was so afraid of the other’s sinking away after you had done it. I hope the Adversity may be looked on as really Diabolic and finally conquerable utterly. I hope to get the lecture I spoke of given before Easter, and I think it will make your wife a little happy—if we both are able to do what we mean, Tadema and the devil won’t have it all their own way this season.

Ever your loving
John Ruskin

Hunt wrote the next letter, perhaps the most valuable in the entire correspondence, on 6 November 1880, although he did not send it on to Ruskin until much later when he enclosed it in a letter of 4 July 1882 (Letter 30). This extremely personal confession of the painter’s spiritual debt to Ruskin—something which one might never have guessed without the existence of this letter—makes this one of the most valuable portions of the correspondence. It opens with a discussion, once again, of Monk, and were the date not so clear, one might be tempted to associate it more closely with Hunt’s letter of sixteen years before. Diaries, iii. 992 show that Ruskin had just returned to England on 5 November 1880, the day before Hunt wrote, and since it is unlikely that the two men had met for some time, Hunt was probably responding to a letter from Ruskin which is now missing.

[Cornell MS. Uncat.] 2 Warwick Gardens Kensington Nov[ember] 6, 1880.

My dear Ruskin—

I am not bent upon entangling you in a correspondence on the subject of Monk’s claims to respect. I will dismiss this question when I have written
what ought to be said in six lines—that I took Renan to read because I met so
many who said that if once I saw his exposure I sh[ou]ld no longer believe in
Xtianity—that Monk's poverty is no prejudice against him in my eyes, and, that
the fulfilment of prophecy—if complete—w[soul]ld be more convincing than any
miracle of God's prearranged plan of government of man and the world. I will
add that having seen Palestine I can judge better than you what its capabilities
are, and that I believe it might become a veritable garden of Eden. If you
believe England redeemable to decent perfection you are undoubtedly right to
work for it only. I think it insanely confirmed in all vanity.

What I want to say is that I hope you will never have any doubt that I always
wish to remember you as my first soul's friend, and I am anxious the more to
say it because I have been in my awkward sense of honour and pride hitherto
prevented from saying it distinctly. In my early life I had the advantage and
disadvantage of poverty greater than ever you knew of, the advantage in practical
humbling, the disadvantage in want of proper education. (My father was a
descendant of a man who lost his property by confiscation at the Restoration
and who had had to stay in Holland to save his head till William III came, with
whom he returned. He had entirely accepted his position as of the trading
class to which his family had adapted themselves but he was a man of great
natural intellect and much reading but he dreaded my choice of painting as a
profession and so angrily left me to myself.) When I was about getting to
manhood I had read most of the easy skeptical books and was a contemptous
unbeliever in any spiritual principles—but the development of talent—and
Shelley and Lord Byron with Keats were my best modern heroes—all read by
the light of materialism—or sensualism. At this time a rather exalted but light
minded fellow student who had himself been converted tried hopelessly—but
not in his eyes—to turn me to Romanism. He had heard in some way that all
the new leaders of thought were joining Romanism and he lent me your "Modern
Painters" (as an example of what such an inspiration could produce!) It was
high time that I got something, and this something thus strangely gained was
what first arrested me in my downward course. It was the voice of God. I
read this in rapture and it sowed some seed of shame, and I then managed to
get the "Stones of Venice." I had already painted things that I recognise
now as good in workmanship but after I set myself to my task with a purpose instead of without. All that
the Preraphaelite brotherhood had of Ruskinism came from this reading of
mine. Rossetti was too absorbed with Dante and with French literature and
still more, of course, English Romantic Rhyme to read what he decided to be
determinedly preaching, and Millais never read anything altho' he had a real
genius in getting others to tell him the results of their reading and their thoughts
thereon. I have never yet read any book with blind submission but these first
books of yours which I met with were a real treasure, and all of your later books
have been the more precious from my remembrance of the benefit which you
conferred on me at first. You afterwards did the kindness which I referred to
in my last which was more gratifying because you gave proof of your knowledge
of my effort to do good work. I, as much as you, feel now that I ought to have
done better with my talents in later life, but long after you knew me I had one
incessant struggle to get the means of paying my rent. No country was ever
so wasteful of its capable men as England in these days. After what I did when I was young I ought to have had work with means of doing it in plenty but I had not and I had many to help when I could not help myself. I say this only to excuse myself for not having done more but the day tho’ far spent is not all over and I hope yet to produce something which will make my acknowledgement of your good influence on me not seem idle mockery.

Yours ever
W Holman Hunt

Most unfortunately, Ruskin’s letter of reply, if it still exists, has not been located, and the next letter by either man was written more than a year and a half later. This letter has previously appeared with a few minor errors in the Library Edition of Ruskin’s Works, where the editors correctly assign it to 1882.

[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.] 3rd July

Dear Hunt

I’m so glad you want to see me—still more that the wife and daughter do—I can come on Thursday and see studio—& go everywhere—but I’ll write again—this is only first scrabble.

There’s nothing so deadly—useless—or mischievous—as Perseverance!—Friedrich at Kunersdorf—the English at Fontenoy.

Ever yours affectionately
JR

[Postscript written vertically on right-hand margin] If you can do a thing easily—do it well; if not—don’t at all—is the only true maxim[?].

The following letter, which contains Hunt’s reply, is somewhat puzzling, because its first sentence suggests that Hunt had not written to Ruskin for a long time—perhaps since the letter of 6 November 1880—and yet that by then Ruskin seems to be responding to the painter’s expressed wish to have him visit his studio, and Hunt himself makes it clear he had sent a written invitation. The following letter may nonetheless suggest that before that missing invitation the artist had not written to Ruskin since 1880.

[Cornell MS. Uncat.]

My dear Ruskin,

When I last corresponded with you I wrote a letter to tell you how I valued your friendship and your influence but the next morning my words seemed so unworthy the occasion that I put it by in my pocket book. Looking at [it]
again now it seems to me that it would have answered the purpose of convincing you that with any difference of views on my part there must always be in me the greatest appreciation of your genius and character, and you would then scarcely have wondered at my desire that my wife and daughter should know you. My big boy [Cyril] I ought to say is away at school. He is 15½ and a good promising enough fellow, with a very good head. If at home I should have mentioned him, altho he is just at that awkward stage when the emergence from childish nature makes in many cases a creature not shew to advantage.

I find now that you propose to come on Thursday. I intended my letter to say that Thursday was the one day in the week on which there was a settled engagement. Should the other days however be difficult for you, if you will kindly let me know this, I will manage by tomorrow morning to put off my sitter. Should the choice of day only have come from misapprehension of my plans I should be rather glad to have Friday or Saturday instead for your visit. My Studio is at 7 Trafalgar Studios, Manvisa Rd. Kings Rd. Chelsea. I certainly have been punished for perseverance this time and I will try to be temperate in this as in all other things in future.

Yours affect[ionate]ly
W. Holman Hunt

I enclose the old letter.

Ruskin's reply has previously appeared with omissions and a few errors in the Library Edition, 37. 403.

31

[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.] 4th July.

Dear Hunt

In my scrabble yesterday I pounced of course on exactly the wrong day!—I'll come on Friday. Please: tell me how to find the studio—and I'll come early in [the] afternoon and we can drive out to Fulham for a cup of tea—and so I return over Putney bridge home.

I am quite certain you are teasing yourself too much about your work. If I could only make you the least bit slovenly and lazy—you'd find it such a relief! It has been only my strong feeling about this that has kept me from trying to see you, lest I should hurt instead of pleasing—but now that you want me—you must bear with me.

Ever affectionately Yours,
J Ruskin

Ruskin then apparently visited Hunt's studio and accompanied him home on Friday, 7 July 1882. The next day Ruskin told Mrs. Severn in a letter:

I had an entirely happy afternoon with him [Holman Hunt]—entirely happy... because, first, at his studio I had seen, approaching completion, out and out the grandest picture he has ever done, which will restore him at once, when it is seen, to his former sacred throne. It is a "Flight into Egypt," but treated with an originality, power, and artistic quality of design, hitherto unapproached by
Ruskin, who had obviously enjoyed his visit with the artist's family, then wrote to Mrs. Hunt, asking if he could come again to see her "and that blessed child", whom an asterisk and note (apparently in the artist's hand) identifies as Gladys.

Friday, 4th August [18]82

Dear Mrs. Hunt

Might I—could I—come tomorrow afternoon again to see you and that blessed child and hear about the picture? I wonder at myself and accuse fate—that I haven't been back to you long ago.

Ever your faithful & grateful
J Ruskin

On 10 August 1882, less than a week after his proposed visit, Ruskin left for a journey through France, Switzerland, and Italy, returning home on 3 December. The following letter, written while Ruskin was preparing his lecture on Hunt, is interesting not only because it shows him asking for specific information but also because it compares the difficulties of his career to those the painter had encountered. Like Hunt, Ruskin felt that much of his finest work had been done on "rotten canvas". The letter has previously appeared, with a few omissions, in *Works*, 37. 438.

Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire.
18th February, 18[8]3

Dear Hunt

You must have thought me unkind in not coming to see Gladys, and the wife, and the picture, and the Sire, when I was in London, but I got laid up quickly with cough and sore throat and had to be cautious in the extreme. I've been wanting to write ever since, but the days have past in one mighty course of cleaning out the rubbish of forty years heaping [keeping?], to see what good could be got out of its dust. All my work, nearly, has been done on rotten canvas.
CORRESPONDENCE OF RUSKIN AND HUNT

But I'm anxious about that picture, always—and please now send me a word of general gossip—and tell me how tall Gladys is—to half an inch,—barefoot of course.

And would you please tell me the exact title of that picture of the sheep in sunshine on the sea cliff—also place of it—and also, place of the watercolour sunset with grey temple and crimson sea, which I have at Oxford, as I want to speak of both these pictures in my opening lecture. You have a strange and great part to take now in England—as the only representative she has of her old faith, so far as her works of hand can show it. May I say a word or two of this new picture—? and will it be seen this season? I would rather, if I might, speak of it before than after the stir it will make.

Much love to your wife—and more to Gladys

and I am ever your faithful & affectionate

J Ruskin

The "watercolour sunset with grey temple and crimson sea" was Hunt's *Sunset at Chimalditi* (1869), which is now in a private collection but illustrated in Allen Staley's authoritative *The Pre-Raphaelite Landscape* (1973). Although Ruskin finally did not mention it in *The Art of England*, five years earlier he had placed it in the company of the artist's important early works:

"Of Holman Hunt's 'Light of the World,' and 'Awakening Conscience,' I have publicly spoken and written, now for many years, as standard in their kind: the study of the sunset on the Egean, lately placed by me in the schools of Oxford, is not less authoritative in landscape, so far as its aim extends" (34. 169). In August 1870 he had written to his American friend Charles Eliot Norton: "I bought a picture by Holman Hunt this year, of a Greek sunset, with all the Homeric colours in the sky . . . so exactly true that everybody disbelieves its being true at all" (37. 20). This first Ruskinian mention of *Sunset at Chimalditi* raises an interesting question. It is clear his purchase of this watercolour was an early result of his renewed friendship with the painter, but since he was reconciled with Hunt at their meeting in Venice of July 1869, when the painter was on his way to Jerusalem, one would like to know how he obtained the picture—did Hunt have it with him in Venice, or did he arrange to have it sent to Ruskin?

The "picture of sheep in sunshine on the sea cliff" was *Strayed Sheep* (1852), now in the Tate Gallery, and Ruskin's query about its title was prompted by the fact that Hunt had originally called it *Our English Coasts, 1852*. In his first lecture
the critic asserted that Hunt deserved to be recognized as the English painter who first created "studies, both of sunshine, and the forms of lower nature, whose beauty is meant to be seen by its light. . . . The apparently unimportant picture by Holman Hunt, 'The Strayed Sheep,' which—painted thirty years ago—. . . at once achieved all that can ever be done in that kind: it will not be surpassed—it is little likely to be rivalled—by the best efforts of the times to come" (33. 272). Making the same claim that F. G. Stephens had made about Hunt's early works more than two decades before, Ruskin emphasized that this early picture by Hunt "showed to us, for the first time in the history of art, the absolutely faithful balances of colour and shade by which actual sunshine might be transposed into a key in which the harmonies possible with material pigments should yet produce the same impressions upon the mind which were caused by the light itself" (33. 272-3). Ruskin, who was as fine an iconographer as he was a formalist critic, further perceived the religious dimension of this landscape, asserting that "it is, actually, the first of Hunt's sacred paintings—the first in which, for those who can read, the substance of the conviction and the teaching of his after life is written, though not distinctly told till afterwards in the symbolic picture of 'The Scapegoat'. 'All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all [Isaiah liii. 6]'" (33. 274).

Of course, the most important picture that Ruskin discussed was Hunt's *The Triumph of the Innocents*, on which he lavished great praise. Ruskin, who was now a believing Christian once again, began his introduction to this painting by arguing that "for all human loss and pain, there is no comfort, no interpretation worth a thought, except only the doctrine of the Resurrection; of which doctrine, remember, it is an immutable historical fact that all the beautiful work, and all the happy existence of mankind, hitherto, has depended on, or consisted in, the type of it. The picture of which I came to-day chiefly to speak, as a symbol of that doctrine, was incomplete when I saw it, and is so still; but enough was done to constitute it the most important work of Hunt's life". If Hunt can complete
it, it will be "the greatest religious painting of our time" (33. 276-7). After describing the picture and its complex symbolism, Ruskin praised its "majestic thought" and the artist's "magical" power of giving "effects of intense light", while further pointing out that "the passion of his subject has developed in him a swift grace of invention which for my part I never recognized till now" (33. 278). Ruskin, who had so admired Hunt's own della Robbias, paid him an especially graceful compliment by closing his discussion of Hunt with the assertion that "none even of the most animated groups and processions of children which constitute the loveliest sculpture of the Robbias and Donatello, can more than rival the freedom and felicity of motion, or the subtlety of harmonious line, in the happy wreathes of these angel children" (33. 278).

Ruskin first delivered the lecture containing these words which proved to be such valuable encouragement for the artist on Friday, 9 March 1883, and the lecture was so popular he was asked to repeat it the next day. Shortly after giving the lecture a second time, he wrote to Hunt and arranged a visit.

[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.] Oxford
10th March [18]83

Ruskin first delivered the lecture containing these words which proved to be such valuable encouragement for the artist on Friday, 9 March 1883, and the lecture was so popular he was asked to repeat it the next day. Shortly after giving the lecture a second time, he wrote to Hunt and arranged a visit.

34

My dearest Hunt

I came up from Brant[woo]ld just now chiefly to get the lecture given about your picture—As it chanced, there being a good deal of fuss about my coming back, I had to give it twice—and it's gone to the printers to-day so that I shall have a rough copy of it for you before the end of the week.

I suppose I may have a chance of finding you at Manvisa Road on Tuesday? If not—just send me a line to Herne Hill. All devotion to your wife, & love to Gladys.

Ever your loving
JR

Hunt must have replied on 11 or 12 March, for Ruskin's Diaries (III, 1048) show that on Tuesday, 13 March he paid a visit to him. Either at this meeting or sometime soon afterwards the painter must have invited Ruskin to spend the day with him and his family on Hunt's fifty-sixth birthday. In the following letter, which contains Ruskin's regrets at not being able to be with them, he also mentions the painter G. F. Watts, whom he was to discuss in his next lecture, "Mythic Schools of Painting".
Dear Hunt

I am so sorry not to be with you to-day, but I am very truly so in heart and hope. I’ve just found a letter from Watts which makes me still more regret my being so far away. I may perhaps get a telegram out this afternoon.

Dear love to Edith and Gladys and I am ever your

faithful & affectionate

J Ruskin

The following letter by Ruskin was written either immediately after the previous one in 1883 or in 1884, as the references to Froude’s *Thomas Carlyle* and *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle* suggest. Longmans, Green & Co. published the first two volumes of *Thomas Carlyle* in 1882, the last two in 1884, and the work on Jane Carlyle in 1883. Hunt’s letter of 29 January 1885 (Letter 40) makes this year unlikely, since it states that the new version of *The Triumph of the Innocents* was complete and ready for exhibition. Hunt has written “For Gladys” on the letter.

My dearest Hunt

I am so very glad of your letter, and that I am able to cheer and comfort you a little. Don’t plague yourself to finish the picture to a day. The one thing is to keep your health—and to finish it rightly.

Your letter is immensely valuable to me, in its sympathy with feelings of which, as I grow old, I too much distrust the stern and sad tenor—and your judgment of the Carlyle life & letters is exactly right. I haven’t seen Mrs C. but know it can’t be nice.

I’m dying to be told all about Gladys’ question. Make that Edith write the same forthwith—and all she can recollect.

Ever your loving

J R

Less than a week later Ruskin sent a page from his rough draft of the lecture to Gladys enclosed in a letter to Edith Holman Hunt. On the upper margin, left, Mrs. Hunt has written: “This bit of M. S. sent by J. R. 8th April, in memory of second April, 1883.”
[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.]
Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.
8th April 1883

Dear Edith,

Perhaps, some day, Gladys may like to have this bit of MS, so I send it to you to keep for her,—I didn't quite like to [break?] it.

I wonder what you answer to those questions? I really am very ready to say 'its all for the best' unless the frost kills any wood-sorrel—and I really can't stand that—

Ever your loving
JR.

The following letter, which responds to a missing one by Hunt, offers further evidence of Ruskin's fondness for the artist. Having heard that Hunt had lost a substantial portion of his invested funds, he promised assistance if the artist required it.

[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.]
Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.
22nd June [18]83

Dearest Hunt,

I am greatly vexed to see the date of your most interesting letter—17th—for I have been two days westerly (at Hereford & Llangollen) and only got here last night.—else of course I should have answered at once. How could I be so hard on you, who have always done all you knew how to do in the most courageous way! but I am very sick at heart at the quantity of ruin which that unhappy desire or hope of large interest brings about among my friends, while the swindlers of the world live upon it. No interest is safe but that of the funds.—And please don’t think I don’t know all you have gone through, and its natural effect on your mind, in distracting and discouraging: but also I am perfectly confident in your power to win a perfectly steady and increasing income now, if you will only recover your health & peace of mind—and resolve to paint pictures more for the teaching, and less for the admiration of the public. Loving you all along and reverencing, you yet surely must know that it is not now only that I deprecate the strain of these gigantic efforts once in three or four years with thousands of pounds dependent on them. I want to see you paint beautiful watercolours—from 50 to 100 guineas each, which could be seen in many places & procured by people of moderate means.

Keep me now continually in knowledge of your health & circumstances. I will assuredly not fail you at need.

Ever your loving
John Ruskin

There is a gap in the correspondence of almost a year, and then we have Hunt’s letter to Ruskin about the French art critic Ernest Alfred Chesneau (1833-90), who first published La
Peinture Anglaise two years before. This book, which went through several editions in both English and French, appeared in England as The English School of Painting (1884) with an introduction by Ruskin. The painter wrote Chesneau five long, interesting letters between March and December 1882, and these I have published elsewhere (in the August 1975 Huntington Library Quarterly) explaining Hunt’s role in Chesneau’s enterprise. Here it will be sufficient to point out that Chesneau, whose conceptions of English painting were largely dependent upon the 1867 International Exhibition in Paris, annoyed Hunt by placing a minor American painter named Fisk in the Pre-Raphaelite group. The painter had decided to tell his own version of the history of Pre-Raphaelitism, and therefore he chose not to correct Chesneau’s version, since he did not want to be anticipated. Another reason for not trying to correct the Frenchman’s history was that Hunt, who had always been a friend of Ford Madox Brown, wanted that painter to obtain as much favourable publicity as possible, and as he told Chesneau in a letter of 3 December 1882: “I rejoice too that you do honour to Brown who has had a very up-hill fight, and is not by any means duly recognised” (Huntington MS. Uncat. L.F.).

Ruskin, who obviously lent the letter to someone else, has written “Keep this of course carefully” between the date and the salutation.

[Berg Collection, New York Public Library, Uncat.] Draycott Lodge
Fulham S. W.
June 15, 1884

My dear Ruskin,

This morning your trusty man came with a note from M. Chesneau, whom I was obliged to excuse myself from seeing because, rather tardily, I am driven to put aside all other considerations, and go away into the country for complete rest and change a good week, or more. I cannot start until tomorrow but I was in unusual need of repose to-day, and, indeed,—I shall be—until fresh air has brought back the hunger of all kinds which means life—to last morning, noon, and night, as truly indeed for a few days it has ceased to do.

May I talk quite unreservedly about my view of the judgment which would be apt in my case to rule my dealings with him? Personally I may say it would be a pleasure to me to have a talk with him about Art. But then the fun of the thing would altogether vanish were I to avoid conveying my own ideas to him,
and I could not do this without speaking very much as if I were arguing against some most preposterous conclusions he has come to on the subject of PRB-ism in his book, and I, for my own sake, would much rather leave these entirely unmitigated. Generally indeed I have determined verbally to avoid claiming any priority in the attempt of our youth to make a revolution in Art. "By their fruits ye shall know them." My fruits have been small, but this was owing to the fact that I was poorer than all the others and that for years after I had done the "Light of the World" I could only pay my rent by doing tinkering. There will be enough to shew that I was independent in my course, and that "Mr W Fisk," and some other notables, to be discovered thro M. Chesneau, were not exactly the painters whose essays were to be taken as examples of my intentions in Art. With M. Chesneau I have extra reasons for not influencing his judgment. He has established a kind of protective kinship with good old Madox Brown, who has not had a very good time of it, and who now has a chance of fairly and favourably representing himself at Manchester. One of the pictures there of "Crabtree watching the transit of Venus" despite lameness in parts I should like you to see, for I don't fear your want of admiration for it as a prize of real living intelligence in Art. Well F. M. B[rown]. with a good stock of facts—when seen alone—really believes himself to be through Rossetti the true father of the set of wild blundering madcaps and narrow minded geniuses who founded PRBism. W. M. Rossetti is too shrewd to go so far as this, but being in the family he leaves it to find its own level, and I wish to do so too. So much of my feelings towards Chesneau. As I must per facte leave London I trust that my excuse will not seem like any want of courtesy to him which without your admiration of exquisite French I should be doubly sorry to be guilty of.

Till now I have been able by taking up my palette to put aside all my weaknesses, and to paint with all my soul: perhaps I have trespassed too much on this power for of late sometimes on leaving off I have felt myself more than tired and wondered what would be the end of this long trouble, which could be kept off only by increasing the cause. But I have many comforts, and one is that in all my trials not one of my dear ones has been touched, and I believe too that we are coming to a crisis in which Our Father will reveal his power in some wonderful way, which will give to his servants more life. I wait for this. Praying that you may have all that is needful for yourself

I am yours always truly

W Holman Hunt

My picture is within a week of finishing which after a week I hope to give it. W. H. H.

Ruskin's response is missing and the next extant letter I have located was written by Hunt more than six months later to announce that he had completed The Triumph of the Innocents.

[Bembridge MS. 107.1971] Draycott Lodge, Fulham
Jan[uar]y 29, 1885

My dear Ruskin,

It has been a long time to wait while working on my second picture ere being able to announce to you that it is done—as I may well say is the case now,
seeing that tomorrow, and the next day only, are left for me to put on the final touches, and on Monday morning it is to be taken away still very tender, as the Arabs would say.

I should have enjoyed shewing it completed to you in my Studio a good deal the more because I feel that it was your interest in the work and your generous expression of this which gave me fresh heart, and the opportunity to set to work again at a replica when the first picture soon after you saw it altogether broke down. So great and so often repeated had been my defeat in the original task—so many days of ardent interest and hope forming with lines, light, shade, and colour the image in my own mind—had been followed by only that amount of gain to lead me on to fresh effort, that when I tried for the fiftieth time to do the crowning work, and this proved from the state of the canvas again impossible, I think I should have confessed myself beaten, and given up the subject in despair had not your encouragement made me put aside my superstition, and trust that God did not intend that I should lose all the labour which had made you admire so much the idea of the design, and thus I determined to set to work again at it. Your lecture too had the happy effect of convincing three good old friends of mine of the great importance of the effort and altho' they are the best hearted creatures possible I may say that they were thus greatly induced to help me with the means to enable me to continue at the slow task—which of course forbade all money producing work in the meantime. Twice I have been very seriously ill, and never have I been free from ailment, but it is mercifully of the kind which leaves me unconscious of impoverished strength in the intervals of my attacks and so I am able thoroughly to enjoy my painting.

Now the picture is to be exhibited in the ensuing season in Bond Street—I think at the Fine Art Society. A descriptive pamphlet will have to be issued to visitors, and I have to ask you now whether you will kindly allow your reference to it in the Oxford lecture to be quoted in the paper?

I trust that you are well and that you will believe me to be ever affectionately yours

W Holman Hunt

My good wife sends her love.

Ruskin responded a few days later, conveying both his congratulations and his permission to the painter. I am not sure to what Ruskin refers when he tells Hunt that he may omit "the bit about the Fat boy", unless he means that Hunt does not have to print his claim that Rossetti was the original inspirer and dominant force of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in its early years. The Huntington Library has a letter from Tupper to Hunt written 5 July 1871 in which Rossetti was referred to as "the fat Jove who speaks in decrees of thunder", and it is possible that Ruskin had talked of him in this way, too. Hunt has written "For Gladys" on the letter.
Dearest Hunt

Your letter is a proud joy to me, and I want solemnly to congratulate you.
Of course—use the words of [the] lecture just as you like—Generally, I say,—all or none—but you may leave out the bit about the Fat boy, if you like.

It must however be distinctly stated that it was written when the picture was unfinished (—by some such phrase as 'This must however be received only as the writer's expression of his feelings at first sight of the picture incomplete—not as his criticism of it, finished'.—or the like—as you think best.)

Gladys must be another creature now from the Gladys I knew—but tell her, I'll try to love the new one, too. Love to Mama also, and felicitations—for this year and its peace—and I trust—serener years to come.

Ever your lovingest
J Ruskin

Hunt solved the problem posed by Ruskin easily—in the fifteen-page pamphlet he wrote to accompany *The Triumph of the Innocents*, he omitted Ruskin's remarks about his relation to Rossetti and his early career, quoting instead those about this painting which begin with the critic's own statement that the work was incomplete.

Two months afterwards Ruskin wrote to Edith, reluctantly telling her he could not accept an invitation she had sent.

Dear Edith

Indeed it would have been a joy to me to come, but I'm only coming to town to see lilac blossom (which we haven't here)—and what of cherry or the like there may be besides and the spring flowers on the chalk of Kent—and the T[riumph of the] Innocents—and I can't be a moment indoors, except to see them, and an exhibition or two—I'm bound to see spring when I can, being so old.

When I've seen the Innocents I'll write to ask when I may come to see Gladys—but I can't sit—or stand [indoors]—unless in winter.

Dear love and felicitations to Holman—a whole cluster of lilac-blossom loves to Gladys & I'm ever your grateful and affectionate

J Ruskin

The content of the next letter, which is dated only “5th June”, suggests that it was written by Ruskin soon after the previous one; and, in fact, *Diaries*, III, 1112 shows that he was
in Kent on 5 June 1885. The friend “Susie”, to whom he refers was Susan Beever (1806-93), who lived near him in Coniston, and Edward Jones is Edward Burne-Jones, the artist, but I am not certain to which of the many Margarets in his acquaintance Ruskin was referring. His mention of *Prosperina*, the botanical study he published in ten parts between 1875 and 1886, show that his insistence on remaining out of doors was not eccentricity—he was gathering materials for his work.

[Chislehurst]

Dearest Edith

I am condemned to be my friends’ sorrow & bitterness just now—but I cannot stand the painfulness of London to me in the spring—and have come down here to see some wild flowers and have vowed to my poor old friend Susie to be back at Coniston on the 13th—I have not been to see Edward Jones,—nor Margaret—(though once she came to see me—as you would have done also like a sweet as you are). But that day I was nearly ill, and indeed—after my morning’s writing which I never sacrifice,—the afternoons must in spring time be in the fields, if I am ever to finish Proserpina. Dear love to Holman—but say to him from me—with all my heart in the saying, that he must not paint from his imagination—or from common nature, for a while now—but look only at the work of the painters who laid the infrangible laws. His landscape in the watercolour just misses being entirely lovely because he has, so far as I can judge, never referred to any great master’s work since the old old days of the Scapegoat.

Ever your loving

J Ruskin

A little more than half of the following letter was printed with some minor errors in the Library Edition, 37. 544. Ruskin has written “see 4th page” at the top of his first page, thus referring Hunt to his comments on education added as a postscript.

[Brantwood, Coniston. Lancashire.]

My dearest Hunt

I never was more thankful for anything than for this letter of yours, assuring me of your recovery from that deadly strain, and being able to look forward to this world still, as well as the next. Every word you say of your illness shows me that you have rightly understood its warning and gives me the best & brightest hope for your future.

My own illness has more shaken than hurt me, but the shake has loosened joints and jarred fibres, and I have not energy yet to think much—nor nerve
enough to face much—but I am more interested and earnest than ever about all
we both care about and very deeply thankful that you can now more trust my
sympathy. None of you—in the beginnings of days, in the least understood
my methodical and canonical way of the old school: nor was it the least in my
course of work to commend myself to you—but the granting of Fate, and of mean
adversity, that has entangled us all—and swamped the smaller craft, who ought
to have been useful to us,—is beyond all telling, now. But I think "—there's
time to win another battle ", as Napoleon said at Marengo.—(Friedrich's last,
Torgau, was won at midnight—with half his army lost.)

At present, the one thing you have to do is to rest yourself, and secure a
staff of mounters and colourmen.—I've been trying for this too & with better
success, though small, than I hoped. Morris has wasted an awful lot of himself
in rhyming and that d[amne]d grisaille glass—he ought to have been the centre
of all serviceable manufacture for us, from the old Oxford Union days.—

Dearest love to Gladys—and much to Mrs Hunt—no time for more today
your lovingest
JR

I hope Edith doesn't think I'm sticking up my little boy's tricks as exemplary?
We all three of us feel exactly alike, I should think, on matters of education—
I've been thinking in what I've written only of what you told me of your landscape
and your recovering strength. More afterwards about the childhood.

Ruskin's mention of his "little boy's tricks", childhood, and
theories of education probably refer at least in part to the early
portions of _Praeterita_, which he had begun to publish in parts in
July 1885. The following letter, which is undated, would seem
to have been written in the last months of 1885 or the first six
weeks or so of the following year, since Ruskin obviously refers
to it in Letter 46 dated 24 February 1886.

[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.]
Brantwood, 
Coniston. Lancashire.

My dear Edith

I think you had much better attend to everything that Gladys advises.—in
my opinion, she's a lot wiser than you! I don't believe she would have liked
seeing a woman dragged about the stage by a black Bill Sykes—You evidently
have never read, or at least understood, one word of the real Othello.

Also, I hate all governness education for gentle or simple—as such—we have
always had pretty governnesses here—who were merely elder children—so I
don't object!—but I do to _yours_! Make Gladys governness in general—and
don't let her learn arithmetic—except on her fingers.

Also, I hate microscopes and telescopes worse than governesses—and if a
boy of mine thought he'd "found out" anything—I'd punch his head—hard, too—
You must really read some of my books, one of these days—both Holman & you have developed me out of your celestial, or at least blue, bubbles [from *The Triumph of the Innocents*]—

Ever your loving

JR

I am relieved by hearing that Holman is only anxious about asthma:—that is of small consequence, though very painful. But he must rest for many a day—and so must I—and chiefly from letter-reading or writing.—The mistakes of my friends fret me more than anything—and fretting is, with me, far worse than any quantity of work.

Ruskin's next letter, which obviously responds to a missing one from the painter, agrees to lend him the *Sunset at Chimalditi* for the major 1886 exhibition of his works at the Fine Art Society and explains his remarks to Edith about education.

46

[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.]

Brantwood,
Coniston. Lancashire.
24th Feb[ruary, 18]86

Dearest Hunt

Do you think when I wrote that savage letter to Edith that I wasn't myself? There's nothing makes me more furious than people's looking through microscopes instead of the eyes God gave them—and boys getting competitive instead of reverent.

And a man's mental powers do coincide with his physical vigour. I can lie on my sofa and gossip about myself,—but could no more read Pindar or Plato for half an hour, than climb Monte Rosa. The asthma will take longer than my fit of delirium to work off—but—don't you work much except at working it off.

Of course you shall have your sunset whenever you like.

Ever your lovingest

J Ruskin

About half a year before these last few letters were written, in July 1885, Ruskin had another attack of madness, forcing him to resign the Slade Professorship. Although he was always most frank in speaking about his attacks of insanity, he was equally anxious that his friends should not assume that any remarks with which they disagreed were signs of his mental illness—and thus his emphasis in the preceding letter that he was himself when he wrote so strongly against conventional education, and his gladness, expressed in the following one, that Edith had taken him seriously.
[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.] Brantwood,
Conistone, Lancashire.
2nd March [18]86

Dearest Edith

I am so very glad of your forgiving note—and so veriest glad that you _believed_ the savage one. In this weather—would you tell both your children to notice—and describe as well as they can so as to remember for themselves, all the different ways in which ice crystallizes on windows, on trees—on water—and in gutters. There is no end to the wonders of it.

I am so glad of Holman’s exhibition—and I think my little sunset will be very useful in its way.

I hope to have at the same time an exhibition upstairs of our St George pictures—with a catalogue in which I shall have to say some nice things of the picture[s] downstairs.

Ever your loving

JR.

The following letter from Ruskin, which has been printed in its entirety in the Library edition, 37. 557, contains his response to Hunt’s account of “The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: a Fight for Art” in the April 1886 _Contemporary Review_, the first of three such articles in this periodical. Although Hunt may have planned to go abroad again in 1886—as Ruskin indicates in his postscript—he did not travel on the Continent until 1892.

[Huntington MS. Uncat. LF.] Brantwood,
Conistone, Lancashire.
2nd April [18]86

Dearest Hunt

I cannot tell you how thankful I am you have been induced to write this bit of history—and have been able to do it clearly and briefly. I am doubly thankful that I had any part in this work—and that so much of intelligible and simple interest comes at once before the public—and makes me understand much I knew not about all of you—

Tired today.

Your lovingest

JR.

_How_ I wish you wouldn’t go abroad again.

I have not located Hunt’s letter responding to this one from Ruskin, but in a letter of 4 April 1886 that the artist wrote to Harry Quilter, editor of the _Contemporary Review_, he told him:

‘I have just been writing to Ruskin (who wrote enthusiastically
of the article) and I have remarked that nothing is loved so much as a Creswick, which can at once be recognized by every visitor as his, because he had only one type of picture from beginning to end. To find a new theme is a great and unforgivable iniquity in the eyes of Tho[ma]s Agnew’s clients” (Huntington MS. 32338). As the following letter suggests, Hunt’s must also have contained a personal tribute to Ruskin. Ruskin’s letter has previously appeared in the Library Edition, 37. 562.

49

[Brantwood, Conistion. Lancashire.
7th May [18]86]

Dearest Hunt

I am entirely grateful for your letter—and deeply honoured by it. But I cannot answer it just now—my head is still unable for thought, or the expression of what thought it has, at any length.

This only I will say, that the signs granted to any of us are always to be read by laws of modest human interpretation, and that their meaning will never be known but by our compliance with the rules of ordinary sense and prudence.

One may feel assured of supernatural sympathy—but only in being naturally wise.

Ever your lovingest
John Ruskin

Between January and October 1886 Ruskin published parts VIII-XIX of Praeterita, and in the summer of 1887 he suffered another severe attack of mental illness which was followed by yet another in December 1888. As Diaries (III, 1151) point out, an attack in August 1889 left him incapacitated for intellectual work for the rest of his life. This last letter from Hunt was thus written while his friend was recovering from this last illness. The final page or pages are missing and this interesting letter breaks off in mid-sentence.

50

[Draycott Lodge, Fulham
Nov[embe]r 26th 1889]

My dear Ruskin,

One used to think that in the evening of life the vexatious hindrances of early days would have ceased, and that it would be possible to see old friends with all the stupid reticences and mistakes of the past cleared away, but it is
quite different for the demands upon time seem to grow rather than to decline. Much to my sorrow I have not seen you for years and now I must write to you to ask how you are.

I am almost constantly hampered by my asthma, and of course my power of seeing friends is by it almost destroyed except for an hour or two in the course of a day. I cannot well go on a journey or on visits for to get free from my worry I have to go thro' a painful and alarming struggle night and morn. At this price I am free to work, and I may say that doing it is a thorough enjoyment to me, and it gives increased desire to see my friends in the intervals of my attacks that I may learn from them how work—they as well as mine—affects the labourer, for age makes one regard life as measured in worth by work done more distinctly than youth did, because in early years there was the thought that the opportunity would come with more deliberately done work to shew that what was already done was nothing more that the mere tuning of the instrument, and later the conviction that the chance is a very fleeting one is very constantly and deeply ploughed into one's mind. It seems indeed that a man is but a word, and that not a very leisurely considered one.

You are happy in your life work in having chosen a means of expression which this country and age has just the sense to admire if not to bow to. The education which men of position get forces them to value attainment directed by good taste in literature, but I am among the unhappy in having followed an Art in which men of good education otherwise know less than nothing—for they are ignorant of their own ignorance—of the Art.

Although Ruskin was henceforth unable to write or devote himself to any intellectual work in these last years, Hunt continued to paint, creating several major works. At the time he wrote to Ruskin he was working on *May Morning on Magdalen Tower* (the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight) and had already begun what is perhaps his greatest picture, *The Lady of Shalott* (Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, Conn.). In 1892 he and his family travelled once again to Jerusalem where he painted *The Miracle of the Holy Fire* (Fogg Art Museum). As his eyesight failed he began to rely upon the services of Edward Hughes, his studio assistant. During this period of his career, Holman Hunt increasingly devoted himself to writing and speaking upon art. He delivered an address to the Birmingham Municipal School of Art in February 1893, later published as a thirty-odd page pamphlet; an address to the Church Congress entitled “Religion and Art” in the same year, which was printed in the 1897 *Contemporary Review*; and the Romanes Lecture for 1895—“The Obligations of the Universities towards Art.” He also continued to write letters on politics, art and conservation.
to *The Times*, and in 1905 published *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*.

Ruskin died on 20 January 1900 and Hunt was one of the many who supported a memorial for him in Westminster Abbey. The Ruskin Galleries, Bembridge School have a postcard postmarked 1 March 1900 stating: "Mr Holman Hunt signs the Ruskin Abbey Memorial with pleasure / Draycott Lodge / Fulham."