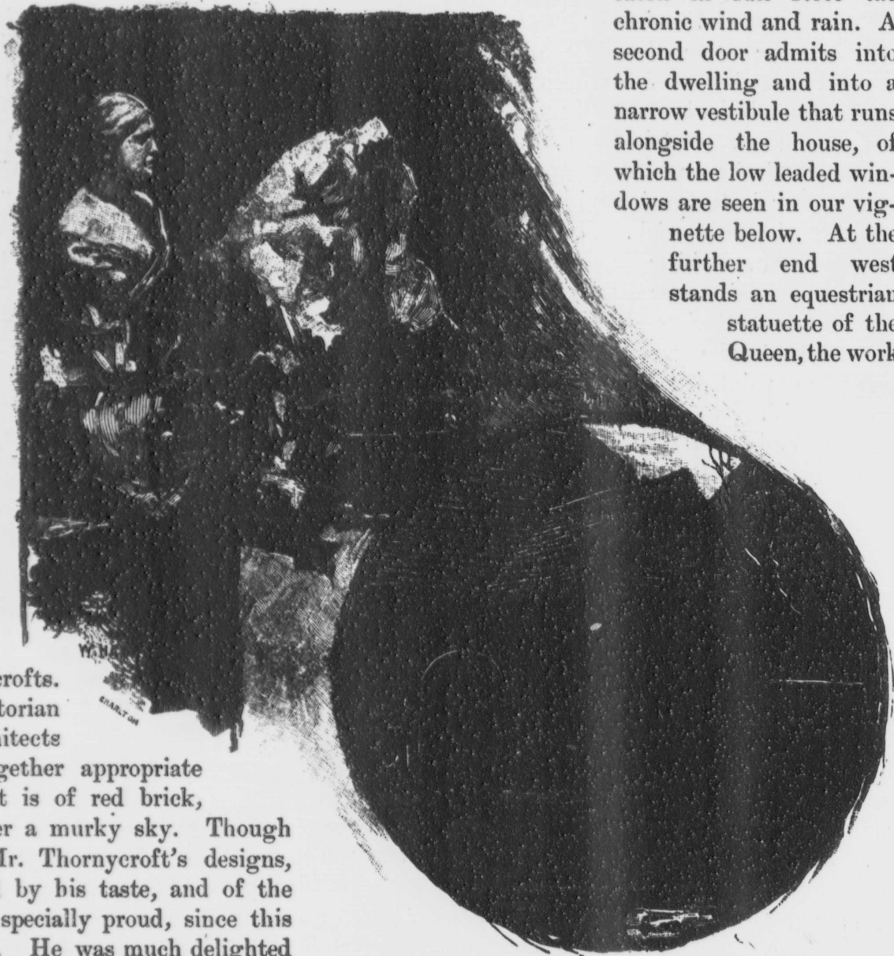
A SCULPTOR'S HOME. Zimmern, Helen The Magazine of art; Jan 1883; 6, British Periodicals pg. 512

In invention and in aim the picture is in some sort representative. The love-god is blind and impassive as Fortune herself; at his approach the maidens who are his quarry are smitten, not with joy, but with amazement and dread; one is already stricken down, so that the archer holds her underfoot, and her hurt is manifestly desperate. From this imagining of love, and love's works and ways, there is abstracted all that is gross, all that is unworthy, all that is trivial and mean. It is wholly noble and wholly spiritual; and the forms in which it is embodied are touched with the august and stainless chastity of great religious art. It is charged with the passionate melancholy which colours the poet-painter's outlook upon life and time; it symbolises love as an influence which is the source, not only of the world's happiness, but of the world's misery as well. But it is the work of one who has "uttered nothing base;" and in the far-reaching significance of its conception, not less than in the matchless purity of the terms in which that conception is expressed, it is worthy its author.

A SCULPTOR'S HOME.

MR. THORNYCROFT lives in that green retreat, the Melbury Road. Here house by house rises the home of some well-known worker in the fine arts, built in almost every case after the designs or according to the taste of the inhabitants, until this street, situated in an arid and unsuggestive suburb of Kensington, has assumed an atmosphere all its own, and even to walk therein is to assimilate something of the higher, quieter, more refined lives that are lived in its precincts; till for awhile the brutal ugliness, the prosaic squalor of London are forgot.

Moreton House is the name of Mr. Thornycroft's home. It is so called after a fine old English black and-white half-timbered house, built in the best taste of its period, now crumbling to decay, in a remote corner of Cheshire, once the ancestral home of the Thornycrofts. It is built in that later Victorian style to which our architects have given the not altogether appropriate name of Queen Anne. It is of red brick, as houses should be under a murky sky. Though not built wholly from Mr. Thornycroft's designs, it has yet been controlled by his taste, and of the entrance porch (I.) he is specially proud, since this is entirely his own device. He was much delighted when Mr. Waterhouse, the architect, admired its idea and proportions. Its distinctive feature is that it is light, and yet solid and protective: two essential requisites for a climate such as ours, to which nothing can be more unfitted than the airy Greek portico affected by our earlier builders—places in which to catch in full force the chronic wind and rain. A second door admits into the dwelling and into a narrow vestibule that runs alongside the house, of which the low leaded windows are seen in our vignette below. At the further end west stands an equestrian statuette of the Queen, the work



A SCULPTOR'S HOME.—I.: THE POINTING STUDIO. THE PORCH.

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of the elder Thornycroft. It is from this corner that we obtain that charming peep of the inner hall and the staircase which our artist has depicted in his third sketch. Very happily do lines

A SCULPTOR'S HOME.—II.: THE LARGE STUDIO.

and curves blend; very pleasantly to the eye do the subdued tints of hangings combine with the dark polish of the wooden stairs, the red tiling of the floor, the *bric-à-brac*, the photographs and engravings that line the walls; while beyond, giving grace, colour, and, as it were, the benediction of nature to the whole, are the green trees of the garden, seen through the leaded window at the base. From this hall open out the drawing-room and dining-room on the left, the gallery on the right. But ere we explore these rooms let us hasten to the studio, where presides the master-spirit. Fully to understand an artist we must see his studio; fully to understand a man's house we must have looked into his mind.

Mr. Thornycroft's studio, or rather studios, are an annex to the house, connected with it by a pretty, narrow little conservatory, gay with flowers, forming an appropriate entrance to a sanctuary of art. The first room we enter hence (VI.) is rather a depository of

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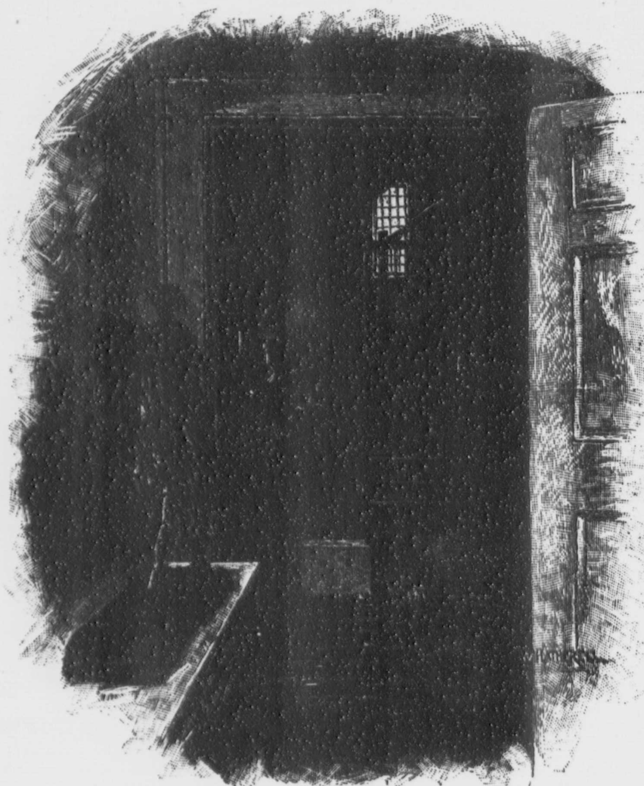
plaster copies of some of the various art-works of the family—for the Thornycrofts, as we all know, are a family of sculptors. Here stand not only Mr. Hamo Thornycroft's "Shakespeare," designed for the Park Lane fountain, his gold medal group of a "Warrior Bearing a Wounded Youth from the Field of Battle," his many portrait-busts of varied merit; but also works by the father, whose pupil he has been, and by the gifted mother who has helped to make the name of Thornycroft a household word in sculpture. There is no attempt at elegance of arrangement. The works stand closely packed together; and since they are all in plaster, always a dead material, and one that suffers terribly from the effects of a London sky, this is hardly the place in which to enjoy Mr. Thornycroft's art. The room however, and one adjoining it, are used for the rougher work, of which there is so much in the sculptor's art. Here is done the pointing, as it is called: the marking out with mathematical accuracy upon the marble the points that shall guide the workman whose labour it is to block out in the rough from the formless marble what may be called the potentiality of a statue, its rude semblance, to which it is reserved to the sculptor's hand to give form, finish, and life. In our first vignette we see the plaster bust from which the workman copies, the shapeless marble, the nicely accurate instrument by which the measurements are taken, and the punctures made upon the block. Here are hewn out the pedestals; here, in short, is done all the work that is rather masonry than sculpture.

The next room, separated from this by only a wooden partition, is called the large studio, and is that in which Mr. Thornycroft's assistants work. The brick walls are tinted a warm Pompeian red, and a curtain, hung transversely across the length of the room, adds to the impression of colour. Here the artist's small clay sketches are enlarged to the size the statue shall ultimately assume; here they can be seen full size, alive with all the soft tender sinuosities that make the clay medium so truly, as Thorwaldsen expressed it, the life of the statue, of which the plaster cast is the death, the marble the resurrection. Here stands the strange framework on which the statue is built up, with its hanging chains that will ultimately be enclosed in clay and form the arms and legs; its leaden pipes that will support the head and shoulders; the iron support, resembling a gas-pipe rather than an artistic utensil, that will form its prop. Large doors open out from the studio towards the garden, and lead on to a paved platform that juts right out into the greenery. On to this platform Mr. Thornycroft loves to bring his work, and even in the garden itself many of his statues are first made. This is another respect in which he is perhaps unique, yet another evidence of his healthful mind. Probably there is no other sculptor in London who has the same true instinct to work out of doors. As nothing is more fatal to letters than the smell of the midnight oil, so nothing is more disadvantageous to art than a confined studio atmosphere. But how many have the courage or good sense to shake it off? By taking out his work into the open, Mr. Thornycroft confronts it with the full light of day. He knows well that sculpture is essentially an outdoor art—that only our English climatic conditions have forced it to seek shelter under roofs; and by taking out his work into the open he fictitiously creates for himself a sort of Greek feeling. He does not see it under the artificial effects of light and shade that must haunt even the best built studio. Under the wide eye of heaven it must be true, if it can stand at all. Here no doubt is the key to the quiet vigorous character of Mr. Thornycroft's work.



A SCULPTOR'S HOME.—III.: THE STAIRCASE.

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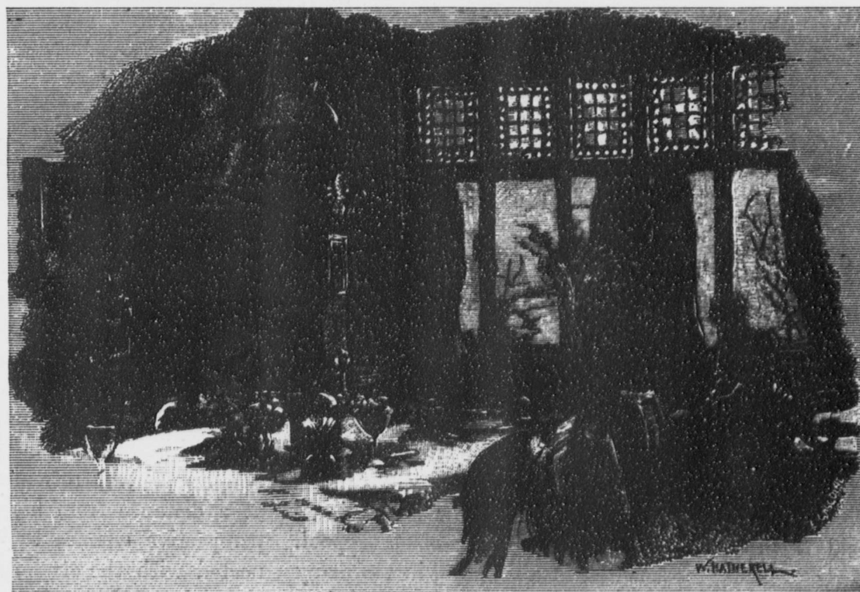
He is fortunate in having a garden to work in; and though it is small, it is so surrounded by other gardens—separated from his own in some cases only by a green hedge—that it seems far larger than it is. The scrupulous neatness with which it is tended, the kindliness with which the flowers grow in it, the miraculous absence of smutty trees and plants, would lead you to believe yourself miles distant from the grimiest city of the universe. Mr. Thornycroft loves the open air, as he loves sports and athletic exercises. He knows that to keep his nature in balance, and preserve his strength, he must remain in contact with his mother earth.

From this large studio we enter Mr. Thornycroft's sanctum (v.). It is large—thirty-five feet in length—and the sloping roof is high; but being somewhat full it scarcely gives the idea of its size. Here, too, the walls are tinted the same Pompeian red. But the principal first impression is that here the workshop element has been minimised until it may be said to be eliminated. Mr. Thornycroft says that he does not like the room in which the greater part of his life is spent to be comfortless. Certainly few sculptors' studios are so pretty, so cosy. There is no dirt, no untidiness, no parade of the utensils of his craft. The very water-pot that holds the brush with which, as with a holy-water *asperge,* the sculptor must sprinkle his clay in order to keep it moist, is enclosed in a brass pot of quaint design, being in fact a Breton milk-pail. It is seen in our sketch, on the rug beside the modelling-stand, which is surmounted by the clay sketch of a monument to a dead father and son to be erected in Liverpool for the widowed mother. Culture, true culture, not its tea-cup semblance, pervades the very air of the room. For while paintings, sketches, photographs line the walls, a piano occupies the place of honour, and a violoncello rests against the jamb. Then there is a bookcase, and books are carelessly strewn around —sure tokens that they are kept to be read, not merely looked at. And examining them we shall see that poetry, and poetry of the best and highest kind, predominates. Upon the floor is spread a matting, with here and there an Oriental rug, forming patches of pleasant colour, another notable feature in Mr. Thornycroft, and rare in a sculptor, being his fine eye for colour. The quaint fireplace, designed by the artist, encloses a hearth with Early-English dogs. And as is fitting, and as it has been since all ages, that the hearthstone be the guardian of whatever is sacred to the house-owner, so here Mr. Thornycroft has accumulated his Penates. On each side the lintel hang photographs of portions of the Elgin marbles, which Mr. Thornycroft recognises as his chief masters in his art; while over the centre is a cast of one of the tigers in Professor Halhnel's "Bacchic Procession," so unfortunately destroyed in the fire that consumed the Dresden Theatre. Over the fireplace itself, beside two Doulton vases, are Mr. Thornycroft's favourite antiques, which he places here, as he expresses it, to keep his eyes fresh, and which enable him, when he lifts them from his work, "to see how bad it is" as contrasted with these masterpieces. It is the period of the Elgin marbles, the highest, purest type of Greek art, that Mr. Thornycroft loves best; and it is characteristic of his sense, his taste, his freedom from conventionality, that the specimens he has chosen to be his Penates are not those that one would, perhaps, look to see upon his fireplace. True, a large photograph of the Venus of Milo surmounts the whole altar, as it may be justly called; but then it would, indeed, be rank heresy in any artist to exclude from his work-room the dearest of the antiques. Beneath the Aphrodité stands a copy of the fine dignified bust known as the Oxford Fragment, probably a Demeter. And truly it is fitting that the Earth Mother should preside over the hearth-



A SCULPTOR'S HOME.—IV.: THE DINING-ROOM.

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stone of one of her healthy sons. On her one hand is a torso of the Cyrenian Aphrodité, on the other the so-called "Hera" of Kensington, with her placid, archaic, curiously thoughtful beauty. The other busts and statuettes all testify to the sculptor's sympathy with early Greek art.

The many busts and statues that adorn the room are from Mr. Thornycroft's own hand. Here we see a bronze cast of the original wax sketch of his "Teucer"—the statue that gained him fame at the Royal Academy in 1881—as well as a full-sized bust. Here, too, stand the masterly little bronze of an "Athlete Putting a Stone," and the excellent standing statue of Lord Beaconsfield, designed by the sculptor in competition for the Beaconsfield Memorial erected by the town of Liverpool. Portrait-busts, too, abound in his studio, in too many cases the mere "pot-boilers" of his profession. Their excellence varies with the artist's interest in his sitters. The most masterly, vigorous, and withal poetic is the "Sir Arthur Cotton." Others reveal that Mr. Thornycroft is not wanting in a certain perception of quiet humour.

A SCULPTOR'S HOME.—V.: THE ARTIST'S STUDIO.

The studio is lighted by a high lancet window, over which, in our sketch, a blind is drawn. Mr. Thornycroft can, when he desires, also light the room from above. The unique feature of his studio, and one of which he is specially proud, is that the wall does not come down flush with the window, but that beyond he has built for himself an alcove or low outer room, which presents the unspeakable advantage that, while he can get his work near to the light, he can himself, by retreating into this outer room, get at a distance from his object, and so have a good perspective whence to judge it. The alcove is connected with the studio by a curtain, and opens out on to the garden. On fine days the door stands open and a luscious background of greenery is presented to

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the eye, refreshing and resting, and combining very gratefully with the white of the sculptures, making them look less *dénaturées* than at the best they are apt to do in London. The alcove itself is a delicious little snuggery, used by Mr. Thornycroft as his writing-room: full of sketches and books, and those silent evidences of culture which the cultured eye is so quick to detect, so grateful to perceive. Stepping out from it into the garden, we see that above its low roof is built a balcony, on which on warm evenings Mr. Thornycroft loves to sit reading or sketching in wax. Beneath, just above the door to the garden, runs a frieze, or what has become a frieze, for it was merely a coved cornice of cement which Mr. Thornycroft chose to decorate. While the cement was wet he sketched in a charming little frieze, representing the story of the making of a statue. On the extreme left the sculptor gazes ardently into the fire whence he draws his first inpiration; then, seated at the piano, under the sweet strains of music he matures it, while the outline of the moon shows that this is night, the time for meditation. The uprising of the sun tells of the dawn of a new day in which the statue passes from the realms of fancy to those of reality. The clay sketch is made, the frame constructed on which the clay is put; here is the model sitting, here the casting in plaster, the quarry whence the marble is hewn, and finally the carving of the work out of the nobler material. All the instruments used in the sculptor's profession are indicated—the modelling-tool, the callipers, the spatula, the point, the gradine, even down to the very screw-jack. Turning the corner, we come upon the sculptor, his work done, enjoying his recreation: hunting the deer, shooting, fishing, playing lawn tennis, evoking sounds from his violin. The frieze, though most roughly and sketchily scratched in with the stylus, is full of poetry and charm.

A SCULPTOR'S HOME.—VI.: THE SCULPTURE GALLERY.

Re-entering the conservatory, we pass into what is called the gallery for finished work (VI.), next to Mr. Thornycroft's private studio the most attractive room in the house. It is a striking illustration of the air of refinement imparted to a room by the presence and judicious arrangement of sculpture. Here the place of honour is given to music, in the shape of a grand piano, and piles of music books lie around; for here it is that the Thornycrofts assemble of an evening to seek refreshment and inspiration from the sister art. Here, amid plants and flowers, stand some of Mr. Hamo Thornycroft's finest works, some in plaster, some in marble; among the former his vivid "Artemis," seen in our sketch; among the latter his "Lot's Wife." Since he finishes most of his sculpture himself, his

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marble work is particularly individual. All work that is completed is kept awhile in this room, perhaps that he may the better judge of it in a new *milieu*, and give it any final touches it may need. Through the open folding-doors of the gallery we look into a family sitting-room, chiefly furnished with Mrs. Thornycroft's sculpture, while a door at the other end conducts us once more into the hall.

Crossing this we enter a cheerful drawing-room, cool and low in colour, of which the only fault is that perhaps it has too much of an uninhabited look, the Thornycrofts preferring their sanctums or the gallery for general living. A notable feature is the fireplace, the tiles that surround the grate being painted with portraits of the whole Thornycroft family by Miss Helen Thornycroft. The dining-room (IV.) has not this unused air, since man, even artistic man, must eat. A warm-coloured pleasant room it is, with its long bay window and lead lightings, through which in the evening are seen the red rays of some of those lovely sunsets for which London is famous. Here hangs Mr. T. Blake Wirgman's finely-conceived portrait of Mrs. Thornycroft, representing her as in the act of modelling a clay statue, the modelling-tool in her fingers.

But after we have seen all in detail, what chiefly strikes us and clings in our memory about Mr. Thornycroft's house is its true artistic beauty and the absence of modern artistic affectation. Every object seems to fall naturally into its place, not to have been put there as the result of much study from the desire to be peculiar and unique. And it is this that makes it, what even the finest houses should be, essentially a dwelling-house, not a mere repository of beautiful things where comfort and homelikeness is the best point to be regarded. This is an error into which our present makers of beautiful houses seem a little inclined to fall.

HELEN ZIMMERN.

THE STORY OF A PHENICIAN BOWL.

"And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift."

TO our modern ears these words from the nuptial song of the Jewish king are charged with a wealth of sacred, allegorical association. But to the singer himself they had a simpler significance; and this significance, though less familiar to us, has still for all time a deep and far-reaching importance. It is the sound of a voice still witnessing to a bygone phase of the world's art-history: a voice which, heard in conjunction with the testimony of modern archæological research, is all the more fascinating, the more persuasive, because its witness is so wholly spontaneous and unconscious. Let us seek the daughter of Tyre in her old-world home, and try to learn something of the fashion of her gifts.

And, first, the fashion of her gifts. In the British Museum, in the museums of the Vatican and the Louvre and of New York, may be seen a number of bronze and silver-gilt bowls, chased and embossed with delicate and intricate decorations. Our first illustration is a drawing from the most famous of these bowls, found at Palestrina, not far from Rome, and preserved in the Etruscan museum of the Vatican. In the centre circle the eye is caught at once by a scene that, by the type of face, the treatment of the hair, the peculiar dress, is manifestly Egyptian. Round the next circle are ranged a frieze of horses in motion, whose character it would be hard to identify. The spaces left vacant are filled in regularly with formally-drawn birds, moving in the same direction as the horses. Such birds, serving no purpose but that of decorating vacant space, occur frequently in the designs on early Greek vases. In the outermost circle the main interest of the artist has unfolded itself. In the upper part of the picture, starting from a tiny fortress, a king goes forth in his chariot to the hunt. Remembering the design of the centre medallion, we might at once assume him an Egyptian. But a second glance corrects our supposition: that high peaked head-gear, that long, crimped, formal beard, that closely-draped figure, are to be seen in the Assyrian relief in our fourth picture; we have seen them a thousand times in other reliefs from the walls of Assyrian palaces at Nimrud, at Kuyunjik. But again comes another surprise—the Assyrian king is driven by a charioteer of obviously Egyptian type. The story continues round the tiny frieze: the Assyrian dismounts, and leaves the Egyptian charioteer in the chariot, while he himself takes aim with his bow at a stag standing in naïve expectation on a curiously-drawn mound: the stag is wounded and falls. All through, after the manner of ancient oriental art, the figures are represented again and again to denote advancing stages of one and the same story. Next, beneath

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