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John D. Sedding
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Garden-Craft Old and New

John D. Sedding (1838–91) was an English church architect and an influential figure in the Arts and Crafts movement. Having worked in Penzance and Bristol, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1874 and set up a practice in London, eventually becoming a neighbour of William Morris. His designs included new churches such as Holy Trinity in Sloane Street (1888–90), Holy Redeemer in Clerkenwell (1887–95), and All Saints, Falmouth (1887–90), as well as restoration projects and decorative work. In 1888 he moved to Kent, and developed his interests in gardening and garden design. This book, completed in 1890 and published posthumously in 1891, sets out Sedding's vision for the landscaped garden. It helped to revive garden features such as terraces, covered walkways and topiary, and inspired generations of garden designers, particularly in the Arts and Crafts movement.

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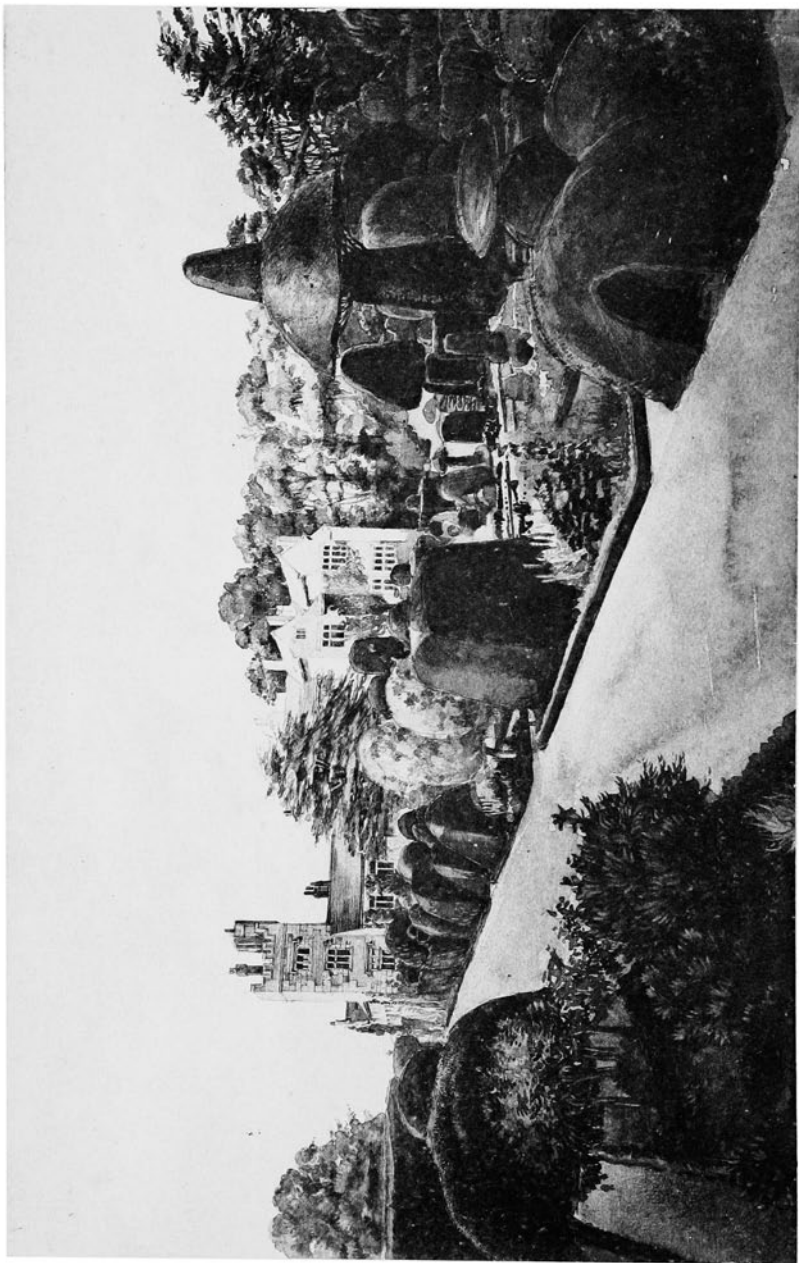
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Levens. View in Garden.

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GARDEN-CRAFT

OLD AND NEW

BY THE LATE
JOHN D. SEDDING

WITH MEMORIAL NOTICE BY THE
REV. E. F. RUSSELL

SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS



LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & Co., LT^D
PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD
1891

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PREFACE.

“What am I to say for my book?” asks Mr. Stevenson in the Preface to “An Inland Voyage.” “Caleb and Joshua brought back from Palestine a formidable bunch of grapes; alas! my book produces naught so nourishing; and, for the matter of that, we live in an age when people prefer a definition to any quantity of fruit.”

As this apology is so uncalled for in the case of this fruitful little volume, I would venture to purloin it, and apply it where it is wholly suitable. Here, the critic will say, is an architect who makes gardens for the houses he builds, writing upon his proper craft, pandering to that popular preference for a definition of which Mr. Stevenson speaks, by offering descriptions of what he thinks a fine garden should be, instead of useful figured plans of its beauties!

And yet, to tell truth, it is more my subject than myself that is to blame if my book be unpractical. Once upon a time complete in itself, as a brief treatise upon the technics of gardening delivered to my brethren of the Art-worker’s Guild a year ago, the essay had no sooner arrived with me at home, than it fell to pieces, lost gravity and compactness, and became a garden-plaything—a sort of gardener’s “open letter,” to take

loose pages as fancies occurred. So have these errant thoughts, jotted down in the broken leisure of a busy life, grown solid unawares and expanded into a would-be-serious contribution to garden-literature.

Following upon the original lines of the Essay on the For and Against of Modern Gardening, I became the more confirmed as to the general rightness of the old ways of applying Art, and of interpreting Nature the more I studied old gardens and the point of view of their makers; until I now appear as advocate of old types of design, which, I am persuaded, are more consonant with the traditions of English life, and more suitable to an English homestead than some now in vogue.

The old-fashioned garden, whatever its failings in the eyes of the modern landscape-gardener (great is the poverty of his invention), represents one of the pleasures of England, one of the charms of that quiet beautiful life of bygone times that I, for one, would fain see revived. And judged even as pieces of handicraft, apart from their poetic interest, these gardens are worthy of careful study. They embody ideas of ancient worth; they evidence fine aims and heroic efforts; they exemplify traditions that are the net result of a long probation. Better still, they render into tangible shapes old moods of mind that English landscape has inspired; they testify to old devotion to the scenery of our native land, and illustrate old attempts to idealise its pleasant traits.

Because the old gardens are what they are—beautiful yesterday, beautiful to-day, and beautiful always—

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we do well to turn to them, not to copy their exact lines, nor to limit ourselves to the range of their ornament and effects, but to glean hints for our garden-enterprise to-day, to drink of their spirit, to gain impulsion from them. As often as not, the forgotten field proves the richest of pastures.

J. D. S.

THE CROFT, WEST WICKHAM, KENT,
Oct. 8, 1890.

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MEMOIR.

THE Manuscript of this book was placed complete in the hands of his publishers by John Sedding. He did not live to see its production.

At the wish of his family and friends, I have, with help from others, set down some memories and impressions of my friend.

My acquaintance with John Sedding dates from the year 1875. He was then 37 years of age, and had been practising as an architect almost exclusively in the South-West of England. The foundations of this practice were laid by his equally talented brother, Edmund Sedding, who, like himself, had received his training in the office of Mr. Street. Edmund died in 1868, and John took up the business, but his clients were so few, and the prospect of an increase in their number so little encouraging, that he left Bristol and came to London, and here I first met him. He had just taken a house in Charlotte Street, Bedford Square, and the house served him on starting both for home and office.

The first years in London proved no exception to the rule of first years, they were more or less a time of struggle and anxiety. John Sedding's happy, buoyant nature, his joy in his art, and invincible faith in his mission, did much to carry him through all difficulties. But both at this time, and all through his life, he owed much, very much, to the brave hopefulness and wise love of his wife.

Rose Sedding, a daughter of Canon Tinling, of Gloucester, lives in the memory of those who knew her as an impersonation of singular spiritual beauty and sweetness. Gentle and refined, sensitive and sympathetic to an unusual degree, there was no lack in her of the sterner stuff of character—force, courage, and endurance. John Sedding leaned upon his wife; indeed, I cannot think of him without her, or guess how much of his success is due to what she was to him. Two days before his death he said to me, “I have to thank God for the happiest of homes, and the sweetest of wives.”

Many will remember with gratitude the little home in Charlotte Street, as the scene of some of the pleasantest and most refreshing hours they have ever known. John Sedding had the gift of attracting young men, artists and others, to himself, and of entering speedily into the friendliest relations with them. He met them with such taking frankness, such unaffected warmth of welcome, that they surrendered to him at once, and were at once at ease with him and happy.

On Sundays, when the religious duties of the day were over, he was wont to gather a certain number of these young fellows to spend the evening at his house. No one of those who were privileged to be of the party can forget the charming hospitality of these evenings. The apparatus was so simple, the result so delightful; an entire absence of display, and yet no element of perfect entertainment wanting. On these occasions, when supper was over, Mrs. Sedding usually played for us with great discernment and feeling the difficult music of Beethoven, Grieg, Chopin, and others, and sometimes she sang. More than one friendship among their guests grew out of these happy evenings.

In course of time the increase of his family and the concurrent increase of his practice obliged him to remove, first his office to Oxford Street, and later on his home

to the larger, purer air of a country house in the little village of West Wickham, Kent. This house he continued to occupy until his death. Work of all kinds now began to flow in upon him, not rapidly, but by steady increase. His rich faculty of invention, his wide knowledge, his skill in the manipulation of natural forms, the fine quality of his taste, were becoming more and more known. He produced in large numbers designs for wall-papers, for decoration, and for embroidery. These designs were never repetitions of old examples, nor were they a *réchauffé* of his own previous work. Something of his soul he put into all that he undertook, hence his work was never commonplace, and scarcely needed signature to be known as his, so unmistakably did it bear his stamp, the “*marque de fabrique*,” of his individuality.

I have known few men so well able as he to press flowers into all manner of decorative service, in metal, wood, stone or panel, and in needlework. He understood them, and could handle them with perfect ease and freedom, each flower in his design seeming to fall naturally into its appointed place. Without transgressing the natural limits of the material employed, he yet never failed to give to each its own essential characteristics, its gesture, and its style. Flowers were indeed passionately loved, and most reverently, patiently studied by him. He would spend many hours out of his summer holiday in making careful studies of a single plant, or spray of foliage, painting them, as Mr. Ruskin had taught him, in *siena* and white, or in violet-carmine and white. Leaves and flowers were, in fact, almost his only school of decorative design.

This is not the place to attempt any formal exposition of John Sedding's views on Art and the aims of Art. They can be found distinctly stated and amply, often brilliantly, illustrated in his Lectures and Addresses, of which some have appeared in the architectural papers

and some are still in manuscript.* But short of this formal statement, it may prove not uninteresting to note some characters of his work which impressed us.

Following no systematic order, we note first his profound sympathy with ancient work, and with ancient work of all periods that might be called periods of living Art. He never lost an opportunity of visiting and intently studying ancient buildings, sketching them, and measuring them with extraordinary care, minuteness, and patience. "On one occasion," writes Mr. Lethaby, "when we were hurried he said, 'We cannot go, it is life to us.'" A long array of sketch-books, crowded with studies and memoranda, remains to bear witness to his industry. In spite of this extensive knowledge, and copious record of old work, he never literally reproduced it. The unacknowledged plagiarisms of Art were in his judgment as dishonest as plagiarisms in literature, and as hopelessly dead. "He used old forms," writes Mr. Longden, "in a plastic way, and moulded them to his requirements, never exactly reproducing the old work, which he loved to draw and study, but making it his starting-point for new developments. This caused great difference of opinion as to the merit of his work, very able and skilful judges who look at style from the traditional point of view being displeased by his designs, while others who may be said to partake more of the movement of the time, admired his work."

His latest and most important work, the Church of the Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, is a case in point. It has drawn out the most completely opposed judgments from by no means incompetent men; denounced by some, it has won the warmest praise from others, as, for instance, from two men who stand in the very front rank of those who

* It is much to be wished that these Lectures and Addresses should be collected and published.

excel, William Morris has said of it, "It is on the whole the best modern interior of a town church"; and the eminent painter, E. Burnes-Jones, writing to John Sedding, writes: "I cannot tell you how I admire it, and how I longed to be at it." Speaking further of this sympathy with old work, Mr. Longden, who knew him intimately, and worked much with him, writes, "The rather rude character of the Cornish granite work in the churches did not repel him, indeed, he said he loved it, because he understood it. He has made additions to churches in Cornwall, such as it may well be imagined the old Cornishmen would have done, yet with an indescribable touch of modernness about them. He also felt at home with the peculiar character of the Devonshire work, and some of his last work is in village churches where he has made a rather ordinary church quite beautiful and interesting, by repairing and extending old wooden screens, putting in wooden seats, with an endless variety of symbolic designs, marble font and floor, fine metal work, simple but well-designed stained glass, good painting in a reredos, all, as must be with an artist, adding to the general effect, and falling into place in that general effect, while each part is found beautiful and interesting, if examined in detail."

"The rich Somersetshire work, where the fine stone lends itself to elaborate carving, was very sympathetic to Sedding, and he has added to and repaired many churches in that county, always taking the fine points in the old work and bringing them out by his own additions, whether in the interior or the exterior, seizing upon any peculiarity of site or position to show the building to the best advantage, and never forgetting the use of a church, but increasing the convenience of the arrangements for worship, and emphasizing the sacred character of the buildings on which he worked."

In his lectures to Art students, no plea was more often on his lips than the plea for living Art, as contrasted with

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“shop” Art, or mere antiquarianism. The artist is the product of his own time and of his own country, his nature comes to him out of the past, and is nourished in part upon the past, but he lives in the present, and of the present, sharing its spirit and its culture. John Sedding had great faith in the existence of this art gift, as living and active in his own time, he recognised it reverently and humbly in himself, and looked for it and hailed it with joy and generous appreciation in others. Hence the value he set upon association among Art workers. “Les gens d’esprit,” says M. Taine, speaking of Art in Italy, “n’ont jamais plus d’esprit que lorsqu’ils sont ensemble. Pour avoir des œuvres d’art il faut d’abord des artistes, mais aussi des ateliers. Alors il y avait des ateliers, et en outre les artistes faisaient des corporations. Tous se tenaient, et dans la grande société, de petites sociétés unissaient étroitement et librement leurs membres. La familiarité les rapprochait ; la rivalité les aiguillonnait.”*

He gave practical effect to these views in the conduct of his own office, which was as totally unlike the regulation architect’s office, as life is unlike clockwork.

Here is a charming “interior” from the pen of his able chief assistant and present successor, Mr. H. Wilson:—

“I shall not readily forget my first impressions of Mr. Sedding. I was introduced to him at one of those delightful meetings of the Art Workers’ Guild, and his kindly reception of me, his outstretched hand, and the unconscious backward impulses of his head, displaying the peculiar whiteness of the skin over the prominent temporal and frontal bones, the playful gleam of his eyes as he welcomed me, are things that will remain with me as long as memory lasts.

“Soon after that meeting I entered his office, only to

* *Philosophie de l’art en Italie* (p. 162).— H. TAINÉ.

find that he was just as delightful at work as in the world.

“The peculiar half shy yet eager way in which he rushed into the front room, with a smile and a nod of recognition for each of us, always struck me. But until he got to work he always seemed preoccupied, as if while apparently engaged in earnest discussion of some matter an under-current of thought was running the while, and as if he were devising something wherewith to beautify his work even when arranging business affairs.

“This certainly must have been the case, for frequently he broke off in the midst of his talk to turn to a board and sketch out some design, or to alter a detail he had sketched the day before with a few vigorous pencil-strokes. This done, he would return to business, only to glance off again to some other drawing, and to complete what would not *come* the day before. In fact he was exactly like a bird hopping from twig to twig, and from flower to flower, as he hovered over the many drawings which were his daily work, settling here a form and there a moulding as the impulse of the moment seized him.

“And though at times we were puzzled to account for, or to anticipate his ways, and though the work was often hindered by them, we would not have had it otherwise.

“Those ‘gentilleses d’oiseaux,’ as Hugo says, those little birdy ways, so charming from their unexpectedness, kept us constantly on the alert, for we never quite knew what he would do next. It was not his custom to move in beaten tracks, and his everyday life was as much out of the common as his inner life. His ways with each of us were marked by an almost womanly tenderness. He seemed to regard us as his children, and to have a parent’s intuition of our troubles, and of the special needs of each with reference to artistic development.

“He would come, and taking possession of our stools

would draw with his left arm round us, chatting cheerily, and yet erasing, designing vigorously meanwhile. Then, with his head on one side like a jackdaw earnestly regarding something which did not quite please him, he would look at the drawing a moment, and pounce on the paper, rub all his work out, and begin again. His criticism of his own work was singularly frank and outspoken even to us. I remember once when there had been a slight disagreement between us, I wrote to him to explain. Next morning, when he entered the office, he came straight to the desk where I was working, quietly put his arm round me, took my free hand with his and pressed it and myself to him without a word. It was more than enough.

He was, however, not one of those who treat all alike. He adapted himself with singular facility to each one with whom he came in contact; his insight in this respect was very remarkable, and in consequence he was loved and admired by the most diverse natures. The expression of his face was at all times pleasant but strangely varied, like a lake it revealed every passing breath of emotion in the most wonderful way, easily ruffled and easily calmed.

“His eyes were very bright and expressive, with long lashes, the upper lids large, full, and almost translucent, and his whole face at anything which pleased him lit up and became truly radiant. At such times his animation in voice, gesture, and look was quite remarkable, his talk was full of felicitous phrases, happy hits, and piquant sayings.

“His was the most childlike nature I have yet seen, taking pleasure in the simplest things, ever ready for fun, trustful, impulsive, and joyous, yet easily cast down. His memory for details and things he had seen and sketched was marvellous, and he could turn to any one of his many sketches and find a tiny scribble made twenty or thirty years ago, as easily as if he had made it yesterday.

“ His favourite attitude in the office was with his back to the fireplace and with his hands behind him, head thrown back, looking at, or rather through one. He seldom seemed to look at anyone or anything, his glance always had something of divination in it, and in his sketches, however slight, the soul of the thing was always seized, and the accidental or unnecessary details left to others less gifted to concern themselves with.

“ His love of symbolism was only equalled by his genius for it, old ideas had new meanings for him, old symbols were invested with deeper significance and new ones full of grace and beauty discovered. In this his intense, enthusiastic love of nature and natural things stood him in good stead, and he used Nature as the old men did, to teach new truths. For him as well as for all true artists, the universe was the living visible garment of God, the thin glittering rainbow-coloured veil which hides the actual from our eyes. He was the living embodiment of all that an architect should be, he had the sacred fire of enthusiasm within, and he had the power of communicating that fire to others, so that workmen, masons, carvers could do, and did lovingly for him, what they would not or could not do for others. We all felt and still feel that it was his example and precept that has given us what little true knowledge and right feeling for Art we may possess, and the pity is there will never be his like again.

“ He was not one of those who needed to pray ‘Lord, keep my memory green,’ though that phrase was often on his lips, as well as another delightful old epitaph :

‘ Bonyz emonge stonyz lys ful steyl
 Quilst the soules wanderis where that God will.’ ”*

This delightful and assuredly entirely faithful picture

* In Thornhill Church.

is in itself evidence of the contagion of John Sedding's enthusiasm.

Beyond the inner circle of his own office, he sought and welcomed the unfettered co-operation of other artists in his work; in the words of a young sculptor, "he gave us a chance." He let them say their say instead of binding them to repeat his own. God had His message to deliver by them, and he made way that the world might hear it straight from their lips.

The same idea of sympathetic association, "fraternité générale — confiance mutuelle — communauté de sympathies et d'aspirations," has found embodiment in the Art Workers' Guild, a society in which artists and craftsmen of all the Arts meet and associate on common ground. John Sedding was one of the original members of this Guild, and its second Master.

Of his connection with the Guild the Secretary writes: "No member was ever more respected, none had more influence, no truer artist existed in the Guild." And Mr. Walter Crane: "His untiring devotion to the Guild throughout his term of office, and his tact and temper, were beyond praise."

It must not be inferred from these facts that John Sedding's sympathies were only for the world of Art, art-workers, and art-ideals. He shared to the full the ardour of his Socialist friends, in their aspirations for that new order of more just distribution of all that makes for the happiness of men, the coming "city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." He did not share their confidence in their methods, but he honoured their noble humanity, and followed their movements with interest and respect, giving what help he could. The condition of the poor, especially the London poor, touched him to the quick sometimes with indignation at their wrongs, sometimes with deep compassion and humbled admiration at the

pathetic patience with which they bore the burden of their joyless, suffering lives. His own happy constitution and experience never led him to adopt the cheap optimism with which so many of us cheat our conscience, and justify to ourselves our own selfish inertness. The more ample income of his last years made no difference in the simple ordering of his household, it did make difference in his charities. He gave money, and what is better, gave his personal labour to many works for the good of others, some of which he himself had inaugurated.

John Sedding was an artist by a necessity of his nature. God made him so, and he could not but exercise his gift, but apart from the satisfaction that comes by doing what we are meant for, it filled him with thankfulness to have been born to a craft with ends so noble as are the ends of Art. To give pleasure and to educate are aims good indeed to be bound by, especially when by education we understand, not mind-stuffing, but mind-training, in this case the training of faculty to discern and be moved by the poetry, the spiritual suggestiveness of common everyday life. This brought his calling into touch with working folk.

As a man, John Sedding impressed us all by the singular and beautiful simplicity and childlikeness of his character, a childlikeness which never varied, and nothing, not even the popularity and homage which at last surrounded him, seemed able to spoil it. He never lost his boyish spontaneity and frankness, the unrestrained brightness of his manners and address, his boyish love of fun, and hearty, ringing laugh. Mr. Walter Crane speaks of his "indomitable gaiety and spirits which kept all going, especially in our country outings." "He always led the fun," writes Mr. Lethaby, "at one time at the head of a side at 'tug of war,' at another, the winner in an 'egg and spoon race.'" His very faults were the faults of childhood, the impulsiveness, the quick and unreflecting resentment

against wrong, and the vehement denunciation of it. He trusted his instincts far more than his reason, and on the whole, his instincts served him right well, yet at times they failed him, as in truth they fail us all. There were occasions when a little reflection would have led him to see that his first rapid impressions were at fault, and so have spared himself and others some pain and misunderstanding. Let a thing appear to him false, unfair, or cowardly, he would lower his lance and dash full tilt at it at once, sometimes to our admiration, sometimes to our amusement when the appearance proved but a windmill in the mist, sometimes to our dismay when—a rare case—he mistook friend for foe.

No picture of John Sedding could be considered at all to represent him which failed to express the blameless purity of his character and conduct. I do not think the man lives who ever heard a tainted word from his lips. There was in him such depth and strength of moral wholesomeness that he sickened at, and revolted against the unseemly jest, and still more against the scenes, and experiences of the sensuous (to use no stronger word) upon which in the minds of some, the artist must perforce feed his gift. With his whole soul he repudiated the idea that Art grew only as a flower upon the grave of virtue, and that artists could, or desired to, lay claim to larger moral licence than other less imaginative men.

I have kept till last the best and deepest that was in him, the hidden root of all he was, the hallowing of all he did. I mean his piety—his deep, unfeigned piety. In his address at the annual meeting of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, a singularly outspoken and vigorous exhortation to laymen to keep their practice abreast of their faith, he used the following words: "In the wild scene of 19th century work, and thought, and passion, when old snares still have their old witchery, and new depths of

wickedness yawn at our feet, when the world is so wondrous kind to tired souls, and neuralgic bodies, and itself pleads for concessions to acknowledged weakness; when unfaith is so like faith, and the devil freely suffers easy acquiescence in high gospel truth, and even holds a magnifying-glass that one may better see the sweetness of the life of the 'Son of Man,' it is well in these days of sloth, and sin, and doubt, to have one's energies braced by a 'girdle of God' about one's loins! It is well, I say, for a man to have a circle of religious exercises that can so hedge him about, so get behind his life, and wind themselves by long familiarity into his character that they become part of his everyday existence—bone of his bone."

Out of his own real knowledge and practice he spoke these words. The "circle of religious exercise," the girdle of God, had become for him part of his everyday existence. I can think of no better words to express the unwavering consistency of his life. It is no part of my duty to tell in detail what and how much he did, and with what whole-heartedness he did it.

Turning to outward things, every associate of John Sedding knew his enthusiasm for the cause of the Catholic revival in the English Church. It supplied him with a religion for his whole nature. No trouble seemed too great on behalf of it, though often his zeal entailed upon him some material disadvantage. Again and again I have known him give up precious hours and even days in unremunerated work, to help some struggling church or mission, or some poor religious community. It was a joy to him to contribute anything to the beauty of the sanctuary or the solemnity of its offices. From the year 1878 to 1881 he was sidesman, from 1882 to 1889 churchwarden of St. Alban's, Holborn, doing his work thoroughly, and with conspicuous kindness and courtesy. It was one of the thorns to the rose of his new life in the country that it

obliged him to discontinue this office. For eleven years he played the organ on Sunday afternoons for a service for young men and maidens, few of whom can forget the extraordinary life and pathos that he was wont by some magic to put into his accompaniment to their singing.

This present year, 1891, opened full of promise for John Sedding. In a marvellously short time he had come hand over hand into public notice and public esteem, as a man from whom excellent things were to be expected,—things interesting, original, and beautiful. Mr. Burne Jones writes: “My information about Sedding’s work is very slight,—my interest in him very great, and my admiration too, from the little I had seen. I know only the church in Sloane Street, but that was enough to fill me with the greatest hope about him . . . I saw him in all some half-dozen times—liked him instantly, and felt I knew him intimately, and was looking forward to perhaps years of collaboration with him.”

Work brought work, as each thing he did revealed, to those who had eyes to see, the gift that was in him. At Art Congresses and all assemblies of Art Workers his co-operation was sought and his presence looked for, especially by the younger men, who hailed him and his words with enthusiasm. To these gatherings he brought something more and better than the sententious wisdom, the chill repression which many feel called upon to administer on the ground of their experience. Experience—“cette pauvre petite cabane construite avec les débris de ces palais d’or, et de marbre appelés nos illusions.” He put something of the fire that was in him into the hearts that heard him, he made them proud of their cause and of their place in it, and hopeful for its triumph and their own success. It was a contribution of sunshine and fresh air, and all that is the complete opposite of routine, red-tape, and the conventional.

We who have watched his progress have noticed of late a considerable development in his literary power, a more marked individuality of style, a swifter and smoother movement, a richer vocabulary, and new skill in the presentation of his ideas. He was exceedingly happy in his illustrations of a principle, and his figures were always interesting, never hackneyed. A certain "bonhomie" in his way of putting things won willing hearers for his words, which seemed to come to meet us with a smile and open, outstretched hands, as the dear speaker himself was wont to do. Something of course of the living qualities of speech are lost when we can receive it only from the cold black and white of print, instead of winged and full of human music from the man's own lips. Yet, in spite of this, unless I am mistaken, readers of this book will not fail to find in it a good deal to justify my judgment.

It seems to have taken some of his friends by surprise that John Sedding should write on Gardens. They knew him the master of many crafts, but did not count Garden-craft among them. As a matter of fact, it was a love that appeared late in life, though all along it must have been within the man, for the instant he had a garden of his own the passion appeared full grown. Every evening between five and six, save when his work called him to distant parts, you might have seen him step quickly out of the train at the little station of West Wickham, run across the bridge, and greeting and greeted by everybody, swing along the shady road leading to his house. In his house, first he kissed his wife and children, and then supposing there was light and the weather fine, his coat was off and he fell to work at once with spade or trowel in his garden, absorbed in his plants and flowers, and the pleasant crowding thoughts that plants and flowers bring.

After supper he assembled his household to say evening prayers with them. When all had gone to rest he would settle himself in his little study and write, write,

write, until past midnight, sometimes past one, dash-
ing now and again at a book upon his shelves to verify
some one or other of those quaint and telling bits which
are so happily inwoven into his text. One fruit of these
labours is this book on Garden-craft.

But I have detained the reader long enough. All is by
no means told, and many friends will miss, I doubt not,
with disappointment this or that feature which they knew
and loved in him. It cannot be helped. I have written
as I could, not as I would, within the narrow limits which
rightly bound a preface.

How the end came, how within fourteen days the hand
of God took from our midst the much love, genius, beauty
which His hand had given us in the person of John and
Rose Sedding, a few words only must tell.

On Easter Monday, March 30th, John Sedding
spent two hours in London, giving the last sitting
for the bust which was being modelled at the
desire of the Art Workers' Guild. The rest of the
day he was busy in his garden. Next morning he left
early for Winsford, in Somersetshire, to look after the
restoration of this and some other churches in the neigh-
bourhood. Winsford village is ten miles from the nearest
railway station Dulverton; the road follows the beauti-
ful valley of the Exe, which rising in the moors, de-
scends noisily and rapidly southwards to the sea. The
air is strangely chill in the hollow of this woody valley.
Further, it was March, and March of this memorable year
of 1891. Lines of snow still lay in the ditches, and in
white patches on the northern side of hedgerows. Within
a fortnight of this time men and cattle had perished in the
snow-drifts on the higher ground.

Was this valley the valley of death for our friend, or
were the seeds of death already within him? I know not.
Next morning, Wednesday, he did not feel well enough to
get up. His kind hostess, and host, the Vicar of the parish,

did all that kindness—kindness made harder and therefore more kind by ten miles' distance from a railway station—could do. John sent for his wife, who came at once, with her baby in her arms. On Saturday at midnight he received his last Communion. The next day he seemed to brighten and gave us hopes. On Monday there was a change for the worse, and on Tuesday morning he passed away in perfect peace.

At the wish of his wife, his grave was prepared at West Wickham. The Solemn Requiem, by her wish also, was at the church he loved and served so well, St. Alban's, Holborn. That church has witnessed many striking scenes, but few more impressive than the great gathering at his funeral. The lovely children's pall that John Sedding had himself designed and Rose Sedding had embroidered, covered the coffin, and on the right of it in a dark mass were gathered his comrades of the Art Workers' Guild.

The tragedy does not end here. On that day week, at that very same hour and spot, beneath the same pall, lay the body of his dear and devoted wife.

Side by side, near the tall elms of the quiet Kentish churchyard, the bodies of John and Rose Sedding are sleeping. The spot was in a sense chosen by Rose Sedding, if we may use the term 'choice' for her simple wish that it might be where the sun shines and flowers will grow. The western slope of the little hill was fixed upon, and already the flowers they loved so well are blooming over them.

Among the papers of Rose Sedding was found, pencilled in her own handwriting, the following lines of a 17th century poet :

“ 'Tis fit one flesh one house should have,
 One tomb, one epitaph, one grave ;
 And they that lived and loved either
 Should dye, and lye, and sleep together.”

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MEMOIR.

How strange that the words should have found in her
own case such exact fulfilment.

E. F. RUSSELL.

St. Alban's Clergy House,
Brooke Street, Holborn.
June, 1891.