The Company She Kept: Susan D. Durant, A Nineteenth-Century Sculptor and Her Feminist Connections

by

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Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
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MASTER OF ARTS

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SHANNON HUNTER HURTADO

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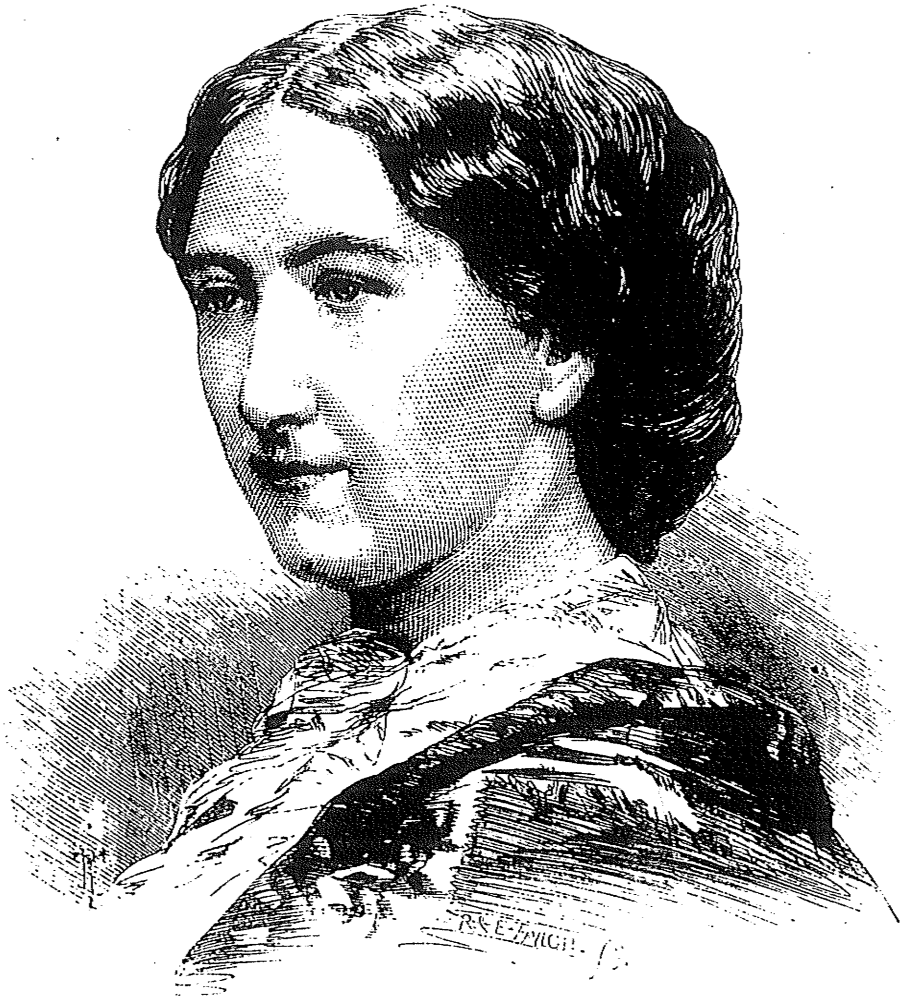

MISS SUSAN DURANT.

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ABSTRACT

Nineteenth-century Britain witnessed a remarkable increase in the number of women who became professional artists, especially during the period from 1841 to 1871. The timing of this phenomenon coincided with the emergence of a varied array of women's rights campaigns which together constituted Victorian feminism. However, little research has been done on the relationship between the women's art movement and the feminist movements of the Victorian era. This thesis examines the social connections and artistic production of Susan Durant, a successful English sculptor, for evidence of feminist commitments. Further, it advances the hypothesis that she is an exemplar of a more widely practised feminism within the female art community of the nineteenth century than has been acknowledged by feminist studies or art history.

Because there is little information available about Durant, an alternative means of obtaining data regarding her convictions was required. The lives of the individuals who comprised her extensive network of acquaintances were used as surrogates for missing data about Durant's attitudes and ideals. This method, which I have termed "surrogate lives," involved an analysis of the convictions held by her acquaintances with a view to identifying patterns of commitment. Durant's written and sculpted works were used as a canon against which to compare conclusions drawn from the analysis of her friendships. In order to place Durant's feminist involvements within a larger context, the major features of the women's art movement were examined for similarities to the characteristics of Victorian feminism.

Significant patterns emerged from the study of Durant's social contacts. The majority of the individuals under consideration were either philosophical radicals who were sympathetic to women's concerns or avowed feminists. Information in Durant's letters and an analysis of the subject matter of five of her sculptures supported the hypothesis that Durant was a feminist. The women's art movement, in which she participated, was found to have a marked resemblance to the Victorian feminist program.

On the basis of these findings, the thesis concludes that Susan Durant was a feminist artist and that the women's art movement was one of the varied groups which embodied Victorian feminism.

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Sculpture, Sanssouci Castle, Potsdam.

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8. Susan Durant. Constance 1866. Marble. Sanssouci Castle, Potsdam. Photo: Courtesy of Saskia Hüneke.

INTRODUCTION

Successful female sculptors were extremely rare during the Victorian era though sculpture was a much-sought-after form of art. Those who appropriated this otherwise "masculine" occupation were pioneers in a society which maintained separate, and unequal, roles for men and women. Susan [Dugdale] Durant Durant was an English sculptor whose career from 1847 to 1873 coincided with a period of increasing public agitation for reforms in favour of women. Despite having been one of the two most successful female sculptors in mid-Victorian Britain (Mary Thornycroft was the other) she has received scant mention in surveys of nineteenth-century sculpture. Her name has been largely forgotten. In this thesis I hope to present something of Susan Durant's artistic skill. However, I do not wish to make her contribution to the history of sculpture the central feature of this work. Rather, on the basis of what can be known about Durant from her circle of acquaintance and her sculpture, I intend to show that she was a feminist who actively supported the suffrage and women's education movements. Further, I will suggest that she is an exemplar of a more widely practised feminism within the female art community of the nineteenth century than has been acknowledged by feminist studies or art history.

In view of the ideology of separate spheres which so pervaded British society, Durant's entry into the profession of sculpting was a radical step taken by a woman who was determined to make an impact on the Victorian art scene. She was not alone in her aspirations. From mid-century a growing number of middle and upper-class women with little expectation of marriage and/or financial security began to demand access to the professions in order to earn adequate livings. Others, sickened by the boredom of the domestic sphere, sought challenging occupations in order to make their mark upon the world. Some, whose skill at painting or modelling exceeded the modicum of artistic proficiency prescribed for all young ladies, dedicated their energies to becoming professional artists. Their endeavours to obtain the requisite training and exhibiting opportunities and professional recognition met with concerted opposition. Durant received reasonably good training on the Continent but at a later time in her life than was usual for her male counterparts. By the time of her death, in middle age, she was just realizing her potential.

Durant achieved considerable success during a 25-year career which began with the exhibition of a portrait bust of Miss Allwood at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1847.[1] For each of nineteen seasons at least one item of her annual output was selected by the Academicians for display at this most prestigious venue. Her works were included in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Art Treasures Exhibition at Manchester in 1857. Furthermore, there is evidence that she sent entries to the Paris Salon and the Paris World Exposition of 1867.[2]

Her record of commissions is impressive. From 1861, marbles for the Corporation of the City of London, the benchers of the Inner Temple and the royal family demanded much of her time. Impressed with Durant's ability and friendly demeanour, Queen Victoria engaged her to give sculpting lessons to Princess Louise in 1866.[3]

Her works received critical acclaim. A bust of Harriet Beecher Stowe (1856) is lauded by The Art Journal as a work of "entire excellence . . . a striking likeness . . . very skilfully wrought."[4] The Illustrated London News devotes half a page to a review and engraving of the portrait.[5] The Negligent Watchboy Catching Locusts (1858), a scene from The Idylls of Theocritus, is praised for its "elaborate and very admirable composition" by The Art Journal.[6] Her entries in the Royal Academy were frequently singled out for comment by fine arts critics; an indication that she was considered an artist worth watching.

Durant's earnings secured her a place in the upper middle class. In addition to a house at Blackheath, she maintained a studio and a separate residence in Kensington which she shared with her father. Business was brisk enough to require a studio assistant and her estate, valued at "under £8,000"(a substantial sum), attests to her ability to command top prices for her sculpture.[7]

Her unexpected death in January 1873 came at the peak of her career. Obituary notices and dictionary references, which acclaim her as "one of our most accomplished female sculptors" and "one of Queen Victoria's favourite sculptors," mark her passing.[8] Nevertheless, by the turn of the century obscurity had fallen upon Durant like a cloak. Although some of her works remain on public view, the majority are known only as entries in the Royal Academy exhibition catalogues. Most of them are difficult to trace. She is named in the standard dictionaries of artists and a collection of her papers is kept in the Queen's Archives at Windsor, yet most historians of art and nineteenth-century culture are unaware that she ever existed.

What caused this precipitous fall from acclaim into oblivion? A quick survey of the history of nineteenth-century art reveals that Durant's case is not unique. With few exceptions (Elisabet Ney, Harriet Hosmer), little has been written about the handful of successful nineteenth-century female sculptors.[9] In Britain, Amelia Robertson Paton (Mrs. D. O. Hill), Mary Thornycroft and Mary Grant are notable. The Duchess of Castiglione Colonna ("Marcello"), a Swiss national, and Félicie Fauveau were active in the Salon of Paris. Emma Stebbins and Edmonia Lewis were among several American women in Rome who enjoyed substantial careers as sculptors.

There are three primary reasons for the omission of the female sculptors of the nineteenth century from the historical record. First, changing fashions in scholarly subject-matter are partially to blame. Until relatively recently, Victorian sculpture has not appealed to the taste of academics or art buyers.[10] Consequently, little work was done on any nineteenth-century sculptor. However, despite the current resurgence of interest in nineteenth-century British culture, research into the lives of English female sculptors has lagged far behind work on their male contemporaries. Feminist art historians have done much to bring women artists back into the history books over the past twenty years, but no one has yet focused on those women who pursued sculpting careers in Victorian Britain.

The destruction of historical records and works of art caused by war and other disasters is a second contributing factor.[11] While it might seem that such damage is indiscriminate, expunging materials without reference to class or gender, this is misleading. Men's names appear far more frequently in both public and private records than do women's. Lines of descent and inheritance are traced through males, whereas women are subsumed anonymously under the names of fathers and husbands. University and electoral rolls offer data on men exclusively until late in the nineteenth century. Most clubs and the military of the Victorian period include no women in their registers.[12] Due to this disparity in documentation of the sexes, the loss of a major source of population records has a more profound impact on research about women. On the basis of sheer numbers of statistical entries about any given man, it is highly probable that collateral information may be found elsewhere. For women the odds are distinctly against such a likelihood. Birth and death records for Durant are missing: the former destroyed by the "blitz" in World War II, the latter buried in the bureaucracy attendant upon death in a foreign country.

Such a lack of data about women not only impedes research, it acts as a deterrent to studying them at all. When artifacts and records are unavailable and the subject under investigation is not a "famous person," there is diminished incentive for historians to conduct the arduous search necessary to turn up evidence. A cycle of obscurity is set up in which the artist remains unknown because no one wants to risk the effort necessary to bring to light a "nobody".

Although gender-privileging is inherent in the two factors already mentioned, it is much less deliberate than the marginalization of women practised by the Victorian art community and many art historians to the present day. The third cause of obscurity is the cultural segregation of women, which, as Janet Wolff has remarked, the art community both documented and contributed to throughout the nineteenth century.[13] The effect of the separate sphere ideology, which confined women to the home front while men engaged in public life, was exacerbated by a discriminatory view of women held by artists and art historians.[14] Beginning in the Renaissance, women were assumed to be innately deficient in artistic creativity. Genius, the capacity to produce art of sublime beauty, was believed to be an exclusively male attribute. Woman's proper role was to be the muse and the artist's model, not the artist.[15] This stereotype in concert with the notion that women should be secluded from public were used as justifications for the exclusion of women from art schools, exhibiting societies, and, ultimately, the history of art.[16]

For those women who managed to obtain a modicum of instruction and show their works at the Royal Academy there was an ambivalent reception. Pleasing, though not outstanding, paintings or sculptures were politely ignored or gallantly flattered as products congruent with what could be expected from the "weaker sex." However, when art by a woman displayed marked talent it called into question the assumption that men alone possessed genius. Critics accommodated this disparity between theory and reality by declaring the woman and her work to be exceptional; the implication being that she was an aberration of the natural order. As a consequence, sculptors like Durant were marvelled at during their lifetimes and dismissed following their deaths, rather like a two-headed calf.

The notion of genius continues to dominate the history of art which characteristically excludes women from the canon. This attitude has ramifications which extend beyond the immediate bounds of scholarship. Because women have not been taken seriously by the art historical establishment, their contributions to British culture are largely forgotten. Works by women held in private collections go unidentified becoming lost to posterity. Worse still, lack of information about an artist and her oeuvre frequently results in misattribution, an error which hastens a complete eclipse of her talent. Many works of the seventeenth-century Dutch painter, Judith Leyster, were credited to Fans Hals until this century.[17] Much to the chagrin of museums, the works were immediately devalued when the true artist was named. Not surprisingly, dealers, who rely on public interest to sell art, are reluctant to handle works by artists about whom little is known. Collectors prefer to invest in "big-name" artists. Clearly, endorsement by art historians and connoisseurs is crucial to the value of a piece of art, regardless of its inherent qualities. Thus, the obscurity of a woman artist is compounded because her works either do not appear in the art market or are dismally undervalued.

Having described some of the reasons for Durant's exclusion from the history books, I will now offer a means of recovering information about her which goes beyond the recitation of biographical statistics to a discovery of her personal convictions regarding the status of women in Victorian society. Though certain female figures from the past have been largely lost to recorded history, often for reasons of gender privileging, it is possible--even preferable--to reclaim them from oblivion through a careful study of the friendships and associations they kept. Liz Stanley cogently argues for the benefits of contextualizing a subject within her own social milieu.[18] In cases like Durant's, where little biographical data is available and where archival documents represent a narrow slice of her life, a knowledge of her social, political, and economic networks can help to compensate for gaps in the record. The lives of Durant's social contacts can be used as surrogates for missing data about her own attitudes and ideals. By her friends and affiliations we can know her or at least prepare a subtler picture of her than would be possible otherwise.

The use of surrogate lives is not without its shortcomings. It would be unrealistic to assume that any one friend or club fully and accurately represents Durant's viewpoint on women's issues; a reasonable sample size is imperative. Furthermore, the success of the method depends upon the availability of fuller biographical information about the surrogates themselves. Access to personal papers, journals, and published materials by and about Durant's acquaintances is essential. Happily, her letters and public exhibition records name a considerable number of friends, patrons and portrait subjects who survive in the historical record. By carefully sifting through the available data an indication of Durant's personal convictions may be inferred.

Sensitivity must be used in interpreting the information garnered by this method. The complex nature of relationships of varying types and intensities must be respected if a reasonable understanding of Durant is to be achieved. In order to obtain a general picture of the people with whom she spent her time, the individual members of Durant's circle must be examined collectively. As a group they must be reviewed for what they have in common aside from their connections with Durant. Patterns or clusters of patterns in their social and political backgrounds must be sought and analyzed. In addition, attention must be given to interrelationships among the surrogates which may indicate focal groups within the larger network of Durant's contacts. The presence of such sub-groups would suggest that Durant shared particular goals or interests in common with their members. By isolating issue-oriented focal groups within the overall framework of Durant's social life it will be possible to refine further our understanding of her commitments.

While examining Durant's contacts collectively may help to minimize their personal idiosyncrasies and thus reduce the chance of giving a distorted view of her attitudes, the degree of closeness between Durant and individual acquaintances must not be overlooked as an important source of insight. Some relationships are unavoidably more influential upon a person than are others. A close friendship between equals who share a mutual appreciation is qualitatively different from the relationship between a mentor and a protégé although each type may have an equally strong effect on the choices made by the parties involved. The relationship between a sculptor and her patrons may be cordial but have no further influence upon her than the contractual obligations agreed to by each. On the other hand, it is reasonable to suggest that at least some patrons choose to do business with artists with whom they share a like-mindedness. Thus the type and intensity of the various relationships attested to by Durant's letters and diary need to be looked at closely to determine the extent to which her social contacts can be taken as reflections of her own view of society.

Drawing conclusions about Durant's convictions solely on the basis of what is known about her friends' thoughts and actions is risky. Corroborative data is crucial for establishing the validity of assumptions arising from an analysis of her circle of acquaintance. This can be found in the work of Durant's own hand. Her papers and exhibition records must be used as a canon against which to compare the information gleaned from the surrogate group. Additional documentary evidence, such as reviews of particular works and articles which refer to Durant's other involvements, will buttress the data already mentioned.

Such a method may aid in the recovery of other female artists from the oblivion to which they have been consigned. Although some inroads have been made, much work remains to be done to bring women sculptors and painters into the history books. Moreover, scant recognition has been given by recent scholarship to the contributions made by female artists, singly or in concert, to the movements for women's rights during the nineteenth century. Thus, there are at least two gaps in the historical record which should be addressed. The history of both male and female cultural production in the nineteenth century is deficient in its treatment of female sculptors. A parallel lack of recognition of female artists in general is notable in the history of the rise of nineteenth-century feminism. The role taken by women artists in the struggle for women's rights has not been fully articulated.

An examination of current scholarly literature indicates that a comprehensive study of nineteenth-century women artists and their feminist involvements has yet to be conducted. Charlotte Yeldham's extensive investigation of female art culture, Women Artists in Nineteenth-Century France and Britain, provides considerable insight into the obstacles facing would-be professional artists and the creative means by which these women challenged the male art establishment's descriminatory power.[19] Her study reveals how women were systematically denied access to serious art education and opportunities to exhibit their work. This marginalization of women's aspirations for artistic careers corresponds with the rigid separation of men's and women's roles promoted by the Victorian middle and upper classes. Yeldham indicates that female artists overcame these impediments to their progress by forming mutual-help groups. However, she limits her treatment of this cooperative action to brief descriptions of the Society of Female Artists (established in 1857), the evening sessions in life-drawing organized by Eliza Bridell Fox and the campaign for access to the Royal Academy Schools. The impact of mid-century feminist activity upon the female art community has not been explored fully and demands greater consideration. Further, as a complement to Yeldham's work on cooperative groups of artists, supportive networks of women indirectly associated with the art community need to be examined for their influence upon female artists.

In Victorian Women Artists Pamela Gerrish Nunn focuses on the emergence of the women's art movement in the mid-nineteenth century.[20] Drawing upon much the same data as Yeldham, she begins her examination of the female art community by noting the nature of its relationship to the overall Victorian feminist scene. Although she acknowledges that women's entry into the art profession was construed by polite society as an act of social rebellion, Nunn is chary of identifying the women's art movement as one of the varied manifestations of Victorian feminism. Quite rightly, she concludes that mere adoption of a "masculine" occupation does not constitute a feminist act. However, her definition of what it is to be a Victorian feminist tends to hold in reserve all but the publicly visible actions of politically engaged women.

A more inclusive definition is required. Greater account must be taken of the wide range of contributions which were made by women's networks to the campaigns for women's rights. In Feminist Lives in Victorian England: Private Roles and Public Commitment, Philippa Levine has ably shown how these interrelated clusters of women loosely formed the infrastructure upon which the more visible manifestations of feminist activism rested.[21] The networks themselves did not necessarily have a public face nor were they rigidly constituted; many of them met in private homes and drew upon natural ties of friendship and family relationships for their recruits. Characteristically, they acted as conduits for informal feminist discussions and mutual encouragement. In the absence of data which would definitively link the women's art movement and its adherents with an overtly expressed feminist agenda, circumstantial evidence of affiliation between female artists and diverse groups of women who were engaged in some aspect of the women's rights debate is invaluable. Attention to information of this sort may yield a subtler understanding of the place of the women's art movement within the context of Victorian feminism. Otherwise, the female art community could continue to be treated as an isolated entity, cut loose from the mainstream of women's social activism in the nineteenth century.

Other compelling studies have been made in which the central focus is on the representation of women in art, rather than on women as producers of art. Among them are: Adrienne Auslander Munich, Andromeda's Chains, Joy S. Kasson, Marble Queens and Captives, Marina Warner, Monuments and Maidens, Susan P.Casteras, The Substance or the Shadow and Marcia Pointon, Naked Authority.[22] These authors expose and critique the objectification, victimization and mystification of women in nineteenth-century art.

Assuming that Durant was an advocate of women's rights, her choice of subject matter and artistic interpretation of it should differ from the sometimes demeaning representation of women which occurred during her lifetime. Her works will be reviewed to determine whether or not they present women in a positive light.

In recent years, much has been written on the profile of nineteenth-century feminism and its proponents. Olive Banks's studies of the social factors which predisposed women to feminist activism, Becoming a Feminist: the Social Origins of "First Wave" Feminism and Faces of Feminism: a Study of Feminism as a Social Movement, have been complemented by Philippa Levine's prosopography of adherents to the movements, Feminist Lives in Victorian England.[23] Levine looks at the strange amalgam of causes which together made up the nineteenth-century feminist program. She portrays feminism as a social force which drew its impetus from private social networks; often transcending political party considerations and at times even breaking through class barriers. Her careful documentation of the religious, familial, political and filial characteristics of female activists gives a more finely-tuned analysis of the social construction of feminism than Banks offers. However, Banks's strength is found in her presentation of the larger patterns which motivated women to take up feminist causes. Yet, despite their thoroughness, Banks and Levine both omit the female art community almost entirely. Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Anna Mary Howitt are the only artists named by either author but their inclusion in the surveys of feminists is predicated on their agitation for legal and educational rights for women.

Though this thesis will focus on the life of an individual sculptor, I wish to place her within the context of a visible group--female artists--and examine her actions with regard to an identifiable social phenomenon--the drive to raise the status of women during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Nunn notwithstanding, women artists are often studied in isolation from their sisters in the art community and society in general leaving historians with an impoverished conception of their contributions to art and life. As a corrective, I intend to investigate Durant's ties with other women in her field and with those who shared her sympathies in the broader political and social endeavours of Victorian feminism. In addition, the subject matter of five of her works will be reviewed for feminist content.

I will not restrict my investigation to British female artists. There are two reasons behind this decision. First, the number of female artists, especially sculptors, about whom there is readily available documentation is small. In order to have an adequate sample of female artists with whom to compare and relate Durant, it is necessary to expand the field of exploration to include those women who worked in Europe. Secondly, similar attitudes about and opportunities for women artists obtained in Europe as in Britain. Durant conducted her career in both London and

Paris, taking advantage of the greater number of exhibition and commission opportunities offered by two countries. Her experience is echoed by that of her American and European counterparts who travelled freely between their studios on the Continent and exhibitions in England.

Among Durant's vast acquaintance there are undoubtedly individuals who present political and social characteristics which sharply diverge from those of other friends. This would not be surprising. Because friendships and professional relationships are contracted for a multiplicity of reasons, social circles seldom reflect truly homogenous values. Although this thesis will focus on the feminist connections of Susan Durant, those associates who harboured anti-feminist sympathies will be duly noted.

Notes

1. Although the beginning and end dates of Durant's exhibition record would suggest that her career spanned 26 years, the last piece she produced was exhibited posthumously. Her death on 1 January 1873 pre-dated the Royal Academy exhibition by four months. Algernon Graves, The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work (London: George Bell and Sons, 1905), s.v. "Durant, Susan."

2. Susan Durant to George Durant, 30 April 1865, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 9. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 28 January 1867, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 117.

3. Letter of Prince Arthur to Princess Louise, 16 January 1866, RA Vic. Add. A/17.

4. Art Journal (London: 1857), 176.

5. "Mrs. Beecher Stowe--Bust in Marble," Illustrated London News (18 July 1857): 53.

6. Art Journal (1858): 171.

7. Probate notice for Susan Durant, Record of Wills Proven in 1873, Public Record Office, Family Division, Somerset House, London. The valuation of her property includes a legacy from her father, who predeceased her by nine months, of less than £225. The studio assistant was a Belgian named Fabris or Fabrio. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 5 February 1866 and 11 March 1866, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 56, 60.

8. Art Journal (1873): 80; and Rupert Gunnis, ed., Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851 (London: The Abbey Library, revised 1964), 135.

9. See Cornelia Carr, ed., Harriet Hosmer, Letters and Memories (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1913); Joseph Leach, "Harriet Hosmer: Feminist in Bronze and Marble," Feminist Art Journal 5 (1976): 9-13, 44-45; and Jan Fortune and Jean Burton, Elisabet Ney (London: George G.Harrap and Co., 1943).

10. Benedict Read, Victorian Sculpture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 40.

11. Ibid.

12. For a fuller discussion on women's lack of access to clubs and societies see Janet Wolff, Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 22-25.

13. Ibid., 28.

14. For one example of the ideal of domesticity see John Ruskin, "Of Queens' Gardens" in Sesame and Lilies, 1865, excerpted in Janet Horowitz Murray, ed., Strong-Minded Women and Other Lost Voices from Nineteenth-Century England (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 37-39. Ruskin was himself an art critic and painter (1819-1900).

15. For a discussion of the notion of genius and woman's place in art see Germaine Greer, The Obstacle Race (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979), 72, 105.

16. It was not until 1860 that the Royal Academy Schools admitted a woman and they sharply limited the number of female students thereafter. This was the year that Laura Herford was admitted by accident. See Stuart Macdonald, The History and Philosophy of Art Education (London: University of London Press, 1970), 30.

17. Whitney Chadwick, Women, Art, and Society (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), 20-21.

18. Ann Morley, with Liz Stanley, The Death and Life of Emily Wilding Davison (London: Women's Press, 1988); and Liz Stanley, The Auto/biographical I: the Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

19. Charlotte Yeldham, Women Artists in Nineteenth-Century France and Britain (New York: Garland, 1984).

20. Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Victorian Women Artists (London: Women's Press, 1987).

21. Philippa Levine, Feminist Lives in Victorian England: Private Roles and Public Commitment (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

22. Adrienne Auslander Munich, Andromeda's Chains (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Joy S. Kasson, Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990);

Marina Warner, Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form (New York: Athenaeum, 1985); Susan P.Casteras, The Substance or the Shadow: Images of Victorian Womanhood (New Haven: Yale Centre for British Art, 1982); and Marcia R. Pointon, Naked Authority (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

23. Olive Banks, Becoming a Feminist: the Social Origins of "First Wave" Feminism (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1986); and Olive Banks, Faces of Feminism: a Study of Feminism as a Social Movement (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981).

CHAPTER ONE

E PLURIBUS UNUM: THE NATURE OF VICTORIAN FEMINISM

During the mid-Victorian period, the public face of feminism could be seen in a handful of pressure groups which campaigned for women's rights. Among the first of these were the circles which challenged the marriage laws that made women entirely subordinate to their husbands, with no rights to property or to any income that they earned themselves. These groups advocated changes to the Married Women's Property Act in the 1850s.[1]

As the century progressed campaigns devoted to improving the physical and material comfort of women, their political and legal status, and their intellectual opportunities proliferated. Although some of the groups operated in tandem with each other, as in the case of those seeking employment and education reforms, most of these organizations pursued independent, sometimes conflicting, agendas.[2] Even prominent individuals at certain times also adopted dissenting stances. For instance, Dr. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, a well-known women's rights advocate, refused to join the organized opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts (CD Acts) because repeal would have undermined her efforts to promote sanitation reforms for the sake of women's health.[3]

Nevertheless, despite the multiplicity of programs and causes represented by these different groups, the overarching goal of all of them was a better world for women. Like the multicolored patches on a quilt, together these groups and the women who comprised them formed the Victorian feminist movement. But before I begin to explore in detail what characterized "feminism" and "feminists" in Victorian Britain, it is necessary to look at the background of these terms.

Originating in France, perhaps as early as the 1830s, the terms "feminism" and "feminist" had entered common French usage by the 1880s. As Karen Offen has demonstrated, the words first appeared in print in Great Britain in 1894-95.[4] Roughly forty years stand between the emergence of British pressure groups for women's rights and the importation of these labels to describe, respectively, women's programmatic struggle for emancipation and those women who entered into that struggle. Some contemporary feminist scholars object to what they deem an anachronistic application of the terms to events and people from the middle decades of the nineteenth century.[5] I will make two observations about the history of the words "feminism" and "feminist" to justify my use of them in this thesis.

Firstly, although these terms were not employed in Britain until late in the nineteenth century, the concepts which they conveyed were being developed and refined throughout the Victorian period. According to Offen, the word "féminisme" was used in France during the 1890s largely as a synonym for female emancipation, an ideal which had been articulated a century earlier during the French Revolution.[6] The Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne, published by Olympe de

Gouges at Paris in 1791, was taken up by Mary Wollstonecraft a year later with the British publication of Vindication of the Rights of Woman.[7] Wollstonecraft's work was succeeded by a stream of articles, such as Harriet Martineau's "On Female Education" (1823), which argued the case for better education for women as a means of improving their status.[8]

Periodicals which advocated major changes in the position of women sprang up in France, Britain and the United States before two thirds of the century had passed. The Gazette des femmes was published monthly in Paris from 1836-1838 with the object of obtaining "the exercise of political and civil rights for women."[9] In London the English Woman's Journal was founded in 1856-57 by Barbara Leigh Smith and Bessie Rayner Parkes as a forum for issues affecting women, particularly the need for professional employment opportunities.[10] During the 1860s, Una, a newspaper similarly dedicated to women's rights and women's work, was published in the United States.[11]

British pamphlets calling for the re-examination of the laws regarding women, for women's education and for adequately paid employment contributed to the overall awareness of women's concerns at mid-century. Notable are two works by Barbara Leigh Smith (later Mme Bodichon): "A Brief Summary, in Plain Language, of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women: Together with a Few Observations Thereon" (1854) and "Women and Work" (1857).[12] The former reveals how "women, more than any other members of the community, suffer from over-legislation."[13] In the latter, Bodichon argues that daughters should receive the type of education which would prepare them for employment, not just marriage. Numerous other articles and essays endorsing one or another means of releasing women from lives marked by dependence and powerlessness can be found in anthologies of writings about the "woman question" in Victorian Britain.[14]

Perhaps the most influential treatment of "women's rights" during Victoria's reign is John Stuart Mill's On the Subjection of Women (1869).[15] Despite its relatively late publication date, the book is a systematic presentation of Mill's convictions regarding the rights of women, as formulated by Mill and his wife, Harriet Taylor Mill, over the course of twenty-five years.[16] The quality of arguments furnished by Mill and others, coupled with the sheer abundance of literature urging major changes in the treatment of women, are ample testimony to the existence of an informed and active women's rights movement during most of the nineteenth century. Clearly, rather than signalling a new critique of society, the words "feminism" and "feminist" were coined to give expression to an already recognizable phenomenon.[17] Apart from providing a shorthand alternative to cumbersome phrases like "women's righters," "strong-minded women," and the pejorative "shrieking sisterhood," the application of a single term to encompass the numerous women's campaigns of the nineteenth century affirms the interrelatedness of the individual campaigns and of the women who mounted them. Helen Taylor's comment to Barbara Bodichon in 1869 acknowledges these connections:

> I am sure all the various movements for improving the condition of women help one another, and all ought to go on simultaneously if we are to hope to see any considerable effect produced in our time.[18]

Like separate pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, the movements in favour of suffrage, women's education, women's access to the professions, married women's property rights, temperance, abolition of the CD Acts and other causes interconnect to form a larger picture of female dissatisfaction with existing Victorian social structures.

Secondly, even in the 1990s, a century after they entered common parlance, "feminism" and "feminist" are still not conclusively defined. A perusal of current feminist literature reveals a diversity of opinion ranging from the very inclusive application of the terms to narrow usages with qualifying adjectives (socialist-feminists, eco-feminists, etc.). Some scholars question the possibility of a unified definition while others confidently present formulae which they believe to be all-embracing.[19] Rosalind Delmar notes the difficulty of drafting a definition that is sufficiently sophisticated to encompass the historical range and cultural diversity of feminism and feminists.[20] This difficulty, rather than suggesting a lack of unity among feminist thinkers, attests to the variety and vibrancy of the feminist enterprise. Thus, when we speak of feminism in the present we do not understand it to be a static entity; it is a continuously evolving complex of theory and practice.

A similar flexibility must be utilized in our understanding of the past. We cannot assume that the label "feminism", minted in the 1880s, carried the specificity or the enormous range of meaning which we attach to it in the late twentieth century. It was then, as it is now, a descriptive term that reflected the context in which it was coined. Present-day values ought not to be projected onto the nineteenth-century; the ways in which the Victorians articulated their critique of society and the means by which they sought to effect social change must be acknowledged as the fully valid manifestations of feminism for that time.[21] Cavilling over the middle-class nature of their efforts or classifying their initiatives as "protofeminist" on the basis of twentieth-century expectations is, at best, short-sighted, at worst, cultural imperialism.[22]

No clearly identified event or "manifesto" can be cited as the genesis for the terms and/or the concepts they signify and current opinion is divided over their content. Under these circumstances it seems appropriate to apply them to the historical period out of which they emerged. The application of the terms "feminism" and "feminist" to movements and persons in the period immediately pre-dating the appearance of those words in print has the benefit of acknowledging the roots of those words. And it is from these roots that the meaning of those words can be derived. In this thesis I intend to examine the British sculptor Susan Durant in the context of mid-nineteenth-century feminism, foregrounding her relationship to the culture which supported feminist activism in the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s.

While the feminist political values must be reserved for the period to which they belong, a legitimate analysis of nineteenth century art and culture can also be conducted using current feminist theory. Although Victorian critiques of gender relations are remarkably fresh and insightful, late twentieth-century analytical techniques bring the advantages of historical distance and greater theoretical sophistication to the study of nineteenth-century women's concerns.

It is, of course, easier to analyze the social trends and ideological currents of the Victorian era from the vantage point of the 1990's than it would have been for the people who experienced those trends as they unfolded. As Linda Nochlin asserts, ideology is normally imbibed in an unconscious manner. Moreover, the rhetoric of the ideology has the effect of dulling and manipulating the perceptions of its unwitting participants:

> one of the most important functions of ideology is to veil the overt power relations obtaining in society at a particular moment in history by making them to appear part of the natural, eternal order of things.[23]

Deconstructive tools, shaped by twentieth-century feminist theorists, can be employed to strip away that veil to reveal the underlying power relations. Thus, current feminist theory may be used to interpret both the cultural context of Victorian feminism and the methods by which Victorian feminists operated within that context. I will make use of twentieth-century feminist tools for my analysis of the Victorian women's art movement in general and the sculpture of Susan Durant, in particular.

The nineteenth century was witness to a proliferation of women's causes and campaigns, only some of which overlapped in the theory and tactics they employed. Attempts to discover a unifying principle within this diversity are complicated by the existence of two ideological streams which drove women to mount these campaigns. Simply stated, these are the enlightenment belief in the rational equality of all human beings and the "essentialist" view that women are innately different from, even morally superior to, men.[24] While the equality-difference debate has raised some important concerns, a persuasive case has been made by both Karen Offen and Nancy Cott that these two ways of looking at the problem of women's emancipation are not necessarily mutually exclusive.[25]

Barbara Caine's study of four Victorian feminists indicates that the adoption of one stance or the other did not prevent women from working in concert with those who held the opposite viewpoint.[26] For instance, in the fight for university education for women, Emily Davies and Frances Power Cobbe were allies able to appreciate each other's strengths despite their disagreement over the equality-difference issue.[27] This willingness to set ideological differences aside in order to achieve improvements in the status of women was not universal. For example, Josephine Butler felt unable to accept Emily Davies' "masculine aiming" approach to women's concerns.[28] Nevertheless, Philippa Levine's research demonstrates a remarkable level of cooperation among feminists of different persuasions.[29] Cobbe and Bodichon were both members of Clementia Taylor's feminist circle although Cobbe subscribed to the "difference" viewpoint and Bodichon adopted the "equality" stance.[30] Together with J.S. and Harriet Mill (also convinced egalitarians), Cobbe and Bodichon worked effectively on the suffrage campaigns. Despite the real diversity which characterized Victorian feminist culture, there was a significant degree of cohesion among its members. A fuller examination of the cooperative quality of the women's networks will be made later in this chapter.

In view of the differing stances, programs and strategies promulgated by women's rights advocates the question arises: was there a unifying principle which permeated this diversity and established a feminist culture? The answer is a resounding "yes"! Although not articulated as a creed in any pamphlet or meeting, at the centre of Victorian women's activism is a critique of the male-dominated order of society which reveals systemic injustice towards women as a group and calls for a social transformation to put an end to male oppression. The writings of nineteenth-century activists for women's emancipation generally display a critique of society along with specific examples of injustice and a call for social change.[31] Mill's On the Subjection of Women, Cobbe's "Wife Torture in England" (1878), and

Bodichon's "A Brief Summary, in Plain Language, of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women: Together with a Few Observations Thereon" forcefully condemn the status quo and make clear proposals for change.[32] Each of the single-issue campaigns had such a critique at heart and together they presented a challenge to virtually all of the institutions of British society. Agitation for reform of the laws governing marriage and the electoral franchise, initiatives to gain access to higher education and the professions, campaigns for temperance and the repeal of the CD laws all were aimed at loosening the hold men had over their wives' and daughters' intellectual, physical, and emotional lives.

The Victorian feminist community reflected the political and social currents of the larger society in which it developed. It partook of the general spirit of reform prompted and facilitated by the Enlightenment and the industrial revolution, respectively. As well, it remained contained by the rigid class structure that dialectically coexisted with Victorian efforts to change society. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the primary locus of social and political change was the burgeoning middle class.[33] It is not surprising, then, that the face of feminism in Britain was a middle-class face.[34] Indeed, McCrone has argued that the Victorian feminist movement was, of necessity, a middle-class phenomenon.[35]

The implications of this class orientation are significant. Middle-class experience and values formed the parameters of the women's movements. With the exception of the initiative to repeal the CD Acts and certain small-scale endeavours on the part of Barbara Bodichon, each of the feminist campaigns was primarily directed to improving the status of women from the middle ranks of society.[36] Emily Davies's efforts to secure advanced education for women were concentrated on access to the university, a level of learning to which the middle and upper classes alone could aspire.[37] Women's petitions for suffrage in the 1860s demanded the vote for those women only who fulfilled the property qualifications which were applied to men.[38] While this stance was politically expedient (any bill to extend the female franchise beyond that allotted to men would have been derided) the motivation behind it does not appear to be exclusively pragmatic.[39] Prescriptions for social reform were conceived on the basis of middle-class women's experience and middle-class perceptions of injustice, sometimes to the unintentional detriment of working-class women. McCrone cites an example where middle-class feminists opposed legislation to limit the labour in which women could be engaged. The feminists cherished the misguided assumption that labour restrictions infringed upon working-class women's freedom of choice; they were unaware of the exploitation the proposed law was designed to curb.[40]

More positively, the general expectation of progress which characterized the middle class during the mid-Victorian era inspired women to believe that change was possible. Significant reforms had already been achieved. The anti-slavery movement resulted in the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire in 1833.[41] Abolition societies served as training grounds for many feminists who learned from childhood how to successfully challenge political and social injustice.[42] Beginning in 1832 and continuing over the course of the century, a succession of reform bills extended the electoral franchise to a much larger section of the populace. Women's expectations were raised as they saw men from the middle class and lower being granted the right to vote.

Mid-century optimism was further fuelled by the doctrine of personal initiative espoused by Samuel Smiles in his book Self Help (1859). Although originally formulated by the Puritans as a means of ameliorating the privations of working-class people through mutual-support initiatives, by the middle of the nineteenth century the ideal of self help had become a panacea for all the social ills of Britain. Smiles claimed that personal success could be achieved by cultivating certain moral values (thrift, duty, character) and following simple guidelines for practical living.[43] Middle-class campaigns to alleviate poverty and improve sanitation among the lower classes urged workers and their families to adopt these principles. It was not until Seebohm Rowntree and Charles Booth conducted studies on the causes of poverty in York and London respectively in the 1890s that the middle and upper classes were made to realize the sharp limitations of the self help ideal.[44] For those women who challenged the gendered order of mid-Victorian society, self help became a strategy for attaining feminist goals. Just as working-class men had clubbed together to form benevolent societies and social clubs for the purpose of challenging class control in Leeds during the 1830s, feminists formed support groups like the Langham Place Circle in 1856.[45]

Self help notwithstanding, the means by which the feminists pursued their goals were distinctly middle class. Women's disadvantages were seen to be caused by both stifling legislation and prejudicial attitudes. However, rather than being suspicious of the parliamentary system (which had brought those very laws into being and had upheld patriarchal traditions), most Victorian feminists perceived it to be an effective, if not efficient, agent of change. Undaunted by their exclusion from the political process, they relentlessly collected signatures for petitions in support of reforming legislation. On their behalf, sympathetic MPs brought the petitions before the Houses of Parliament and gave voice to the women's demands.[46]

Where legislation was not required, private initiative was brought into play. Under the influence of laissez-faire capitalism it was customary for private and charitable enterprises of all sorts to be paid for by canvassed donations.[47] Convinced that establishing an institution of higher learning was of paramount importance to the women's education campaign, Emily Davies raised funds for Girton College through subscriptions and donations solicited from women of the middle and upper strata of society.[48]

Middle-class Victorian morality is fabled. However, while it is tempting to overdraw bourgeois sensibilities it is necessary to distinguish between outward observance and private adherence to moral standards. The majority of feminists were well aware that the credibility of the entire women's movement depended upon strict fidelity to the social code and they made rigorous attempts to avoid the appearance of impropriety. Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, a member of the CD agitation and the secretary of the Married Women's Property Committee during the 1870s, was asked by Millicent Garrett Fawcett to resign her committee office because of her pregnancy out of wedlock. Fawcett feared that Elmy's public rejection of the institution of marriage would bring disrepute to both the committee and feminism in general.[49] That Elmy was allowed to continue as a member of the committee suggests that the feminists were more tolerant of moral lapses than they could permit themselves to admit publicly. Similarly, when Kate Amberley was first introduced to George Eliot, she extended a luncheon invitation to Eliot and her "husband," George Henry Lewes. Lewes writes "this was against rules, so she [Kate] is to come to us next Sunday."[50] Presumably the "rules" were Eliot's own means of protecting others from the social disapproval which surrounded her long-term relationship with Lewes, a married man. A visit from Kate could be accomplished with more discretion than might be possible if the notorious couple went to the Amberley home.

The sculptor Susan Durant herself was accepted by her feminist friends despite at least two extra-marital affairs, one of which resulted in the birth of her only child. Harriet Grote, whose husband George had conducted an affair of three years with the sculptor, forgave Durant and kept the whole business quite confidential, revealing Durant's identity to the Mills but not to Kate Amberley.[51] As I will explain more fully in Chapter Three, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell cared for Durant's son by a second affair and kept his origins secret even from her own adult daughter.[5

Harriet Grote maintained contact with other women who openly flouted the moral standards. Kate Amberley recorded Harriet's impressions of George Sand, "whom she knows."

> She said she was a bad woman, was the death of Schoppin [Chopin]. Once Mrs. G. asked [Sand] why she did not write to elevate the moral nature, instead of only romancing; whereupon G. Sand took a pipe out of her mouth & said: "Voyez vs chère Mm Grote, je suis romancière pas moraliste." [You see Mrs. Grote, I am a novelist not a moralist. (author's translation)][53]

Harriet's visits with Sand were likely made in the relative anonymity afforded to travellers in a foreign country. There it was safe for her to discuss intellectual and moral issues with a controversial literary figure without incurring guilt by association. Although the women who conducted various feminist campaigns realized that their success depended upon a reputation for virtuous living, at least some of them privately challenged the moral code within which they were confined.[54]

The nineteenth-century middle class was not a homogenous social unit; it was fractured into a diversity of political, religious and economic factions ranging from conservatism to radicalism, Unitarianism to evangelicalism and wealth to penury. Whereas Victorian feminism imbibed and reflected the general values of the middle class, the feminists themselves were not fully representative of the social range within the class. Certainly those women who identified with the cause for female emancipation came from a variety of religious, economic and political backgrounds. However, as Banks's research has shown, some backgrounds were more likely to produce feminists than were others. In Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement and Becoming a Feminist: The Social Origins of "First Wave" Feminism, Banks focuses on sociological categories (class, education, religion and politics) identifying the frequency with which feminists emerge from this or that group within each category. From this material she is able to detect the following predisposing patterns.

Unconventional family attitudes nurtured feminist tendencies. Fathers who had unorthodox views (often religiously or politically motivated) about marriage and family life typically encouraged their daughters to challenge the social norms. Benjamin Leigh Smith, a second-generation Radical MP, and Anne Longden spent the nine years preceding Anne's premature death together without formalizing their union or legitimizing the children born to them. Believing that daughters, like sons, should be financially independent Leigh Smith provided Barbara (later Bodichon) and her sisters Bella and Annie each with a sizeable annual allowance when they reached age twenty-one.[55] William Ashust, father of feminists Eliza, Caroline, Emilie and Matilda, was another radical who encouraged his daughters' involvement in women's issues and condoned their unusual lifestyles.[56] After the middle of the nineteenth century, the influence of feminist mothers too can be seen in the new generation of female activists.[57] The Pankhurst women, Harriet and Helen Taylor, Mary and Anna Mary Howitt are all examples of the spread of feminism from mothers to daughters.

A radical Liberal background was another significant force in the development of Victorian feminism. Many feminists who were born before 1835 spent their childhoods in homes dedicated to the abolition of slavery, support for the Chartists or repeal of the Corn Laws. From an early age they were exposed to the leading radical theorists and activists who came to meetings and discussions hosted by their parents. Although daughters of conservative families also found their way into the women's movements (albeit in reaction to rather than agreement with their backgrounds), research by Rendall, Levine and Banks indicates a disproportionate representation of radical political sympathies in feminist circles.[58] Levine cautions against a simplistic equation of radical family background with feminist consciousness, noting that family dynamics are complex and that feminism was not born of any single influence on the lives of these women. Whatever other factors may have been at work, women reared in households embracing radicalism were inculcated with a sensitivity to social injustice and a knowledge of the methods by which to challenge that injustice effectively. For them, it was a small step from equal rights for blacks or working-class people to equal rights for women.

Families that embraced dissenting religious traditions also provided a fertile seedbed for feminism. The Blackwells were Bristol Methodists, the Leigh Smiths, Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Gaskell and Eliza Fox all hailed from Unitarian families, and the Howitts vacillated between Quakerism, Unitarianism and Catholicism.[59] In all probability, these families' non-conformity in matters of religion was but one symptom of a general dissatisfaction with social conventions; most of them combined religious dissent with liberal or radical politics.[60] Furthermore, certain of the dissenting groups had an early history of women's involvement in all aspects of ministry, including itinerant preaching and teaching, which continued into the 1860s.[61] A religious ethos which placed more value on personal ability than on gender gave girls self-confidence and provided them with strong female role models outside the domestic sphere. Evangelicals, of whatever denominational stripe, form a conspicuous group among those feminists in Banks's sample whose religious affiliation is known.[62] The emphasis on mission and social action among the disadvantaged gave evangelical women valuable experience in organizing campaigns and affirmed their importance as moral agents.[63] Josephine Butler's crusade against the CD acts was facilitated by her religious convictions and philanthropic training. Although she remained faithful to her background, others who had cut their teeth on evangelicalism retained only the organizational elements of their religious training.[64]

Finally, women who became feminists were unusually well-educated in comparison to their female peers.[65] The Garrett sisters, and the Blackwell sisters had fathers who believed in educating their daughters much as they educated their sons.[66] Newson Garrett sent his daughters to Miss Browning's school at Blackheath where the emphasis was on intellectual development, not drawing room "accomplishments." Later, when Elizabeth Garrett sought to enter medical training at University College, Newson joined in an appeal to the institution's governors to change the Charter and admit female students.[67] Two new women's educational establishments in London, Queen's College (1848) and Bedford College (1849), provided serious training for many of the women who later entered the feminist ranks. Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes were students at Bedford, which was founded and run by women. Queen's College numbered Adelaide Proctor, Sophia Jex-Blake, Beale and Buss among its students.[68] Those who did not attend schools "had simply acquired a better than average education through their family, probably via fathers and brothers" according to Rendall.[69] In addition to providing intellectual benefits, boarding schools and colleges brought young women with progressive ideas together. It was at Miss Browning's school that Elizabeth Garrett met and befriended Emily Davies and the Crow sisters; thus the seeds of that most characteristic feature of Victorian feminism, women's networks, were sown.[70] I will explore the origins and impact of the feminist networks in the next section.

Victorian society, with its ideology of separate spheres, was as firmly segregated along gender lines as it was along the boundaries of class. As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has shown, confined to the domestic realm, middle-class women in nineteenth-century America spent the greater part of each day in the company of their female friends and relations with whom they developed fervent and enduring attachments.[71] In her article about love and ritual in the world of nineteenth-century women, Smith-Rosenberg celebrates the wealth of support and companionship provided by female relationships; ties with female members of the extended family were augmented by friendships with individuals and their families to form a complex web of relationships which were not diminished by marriage or geographical distance.

Although Smith-Rosenberg's study reflects the experience of women in nineteenth-century America, the lives of Englishwomen were strikingly similar. Like the women with whom she peopled her novels, Elizabeth Gaskell spent most of her time with her four daughters, literary friends such as Charlotte Bronte and Elizabeth

Barrett Browning, the Winkworth sisters, and Unitarian friends like Eliza Bridell Fox. Her social circle extended outside the walls of her Manchester home to encompass women friends in foreign countries. Beginning in 1854 she visited regularly at the home of Mme. Mohl in Paris and she entertained the American novelist and essayist Harriet Beecher Stowe in Manchester on several occasions during the 1850s.[72]

It was within the nurturing environment of female relationships that Victorian feminism took root and proliferated. Informal networks of middle and upper-class women, who were dissatisfied with the opportunities Victorian culture held out to them, had begun to coalesce by the late 1840s. A profound shift occurred in the focus of these women's female relationships; shared domestic concerns were displaced by feminist issues. With reference to Smith-Rosenberg's findings Levine asserts that:

> A similar pattern of incentive within a specifically feminist, rather than female, context derived its strength from these earlier sources but rewrote the content accordingly.[73]

Families like the Blackwells, the Leigh Smiths and the Garretts produced feminist sisters (and, in the case of the Blackwells, brothers) who joined forces with other like-minded women to bring about change. Women engaged in the fine arts and other professional endeavours met together for mutual support, often devising means by which to acquire the requisite training for their occupations. Barbara Bodichon and

Anna Mary Howitt, both aspiring artists, were habituées of the art historian Anna Jameson's Thursday evening gatherings to which Elizabeth Blackwell also had a standing invitation.[74] Elizabeth Gaskell's circle of friends was responsible for sensitizing her to the need for women's rights.[75] Harriet Grote's expansive social circle included John Stuart Mill, Helen Taylor, Lady Amberley and numerous other feminists attached to the campaigns for suffrage, married women's property and women's education; names such as Lady Stanley of Alderley, Barbara Bodichon, Anna Jameson, Harriet Martineau, and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson are listed among her acquaintance.

Kate Amberley records a visit she and Harriet Grote made to their mutual friend Susan Durant at her studio in Paris. There they saw the bust of Homer that Durant was preparing for Harriet Grote's new home in Surrey. On other occasions Durant stayed at Harriet Grote's home for two or three days at a time.[76]

The geographical extent of these informal women's networks is impressive. Foreign visitors were welcomed and incorporated into the feminist communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Harriet Beecher Stowe was introduced to various groups of women during her pilgrimages to Britain and Europe in the 1850s. When in Paris in 1856 she met with Susan Durant who was staying at the same pension as Stowe and her companions. As a result of this chance meeting, Stowe agreed to sit for a portrait bust by Durant, spending a series of afternoons in the studio of the vibrant sculptor and meeting some of Durant's friends.[77] Stowe stayed with Elizabeth Gaskell in her home near Manchester in 1853 and again in 1857, maintaining contact by letters in the intervals.[78] While visiting Rome, sometime between 1858 and 1860, Stowe joined into the lively feminist conversations that could be had at Elizabeth Barrett Browning's home. There she made clear her views about a woman's right to choose a profession outside the domestic environment:

> Did anybody ever think that Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Kemble and Risorti had better have applied themselves sedulously to keeping house, because they were women?

Another member of the circle, the American sculptor Harriet Hosmer, heartily agreed with Stowe's sentiments.[79] During 1857-58 Bodichon made a honeymoon tour of the United States where she observed the ills of slavery and spent time with her friend Elizabeth Blackwell.[80] Another travelling feminist, Louisa May Alcott, was warmly received into the company of radicals and feminists who congregated in Clementia Taylor's London home.[81]

By the 1850s and 1860s some more formally constituted networks were established. The Langham Place Circle and the Kensington Society, neither of which was defined by a specific women's issue, provided meeting places for feminists who later went on to found the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, the Victoria Press, and the Society of Female Artists.[82]

The networks served a variety of functions. Discussion evenings held at the Taylor, Bodichon and Jameson homes permitted the exchange of ideas between men and women who sought social change. There, strategies could be devised, petitions composed and converts made for the various feminist causes.

Interconnecting groups of women acted as conduits for news about campaign efforts, notices of petitions to be signed or advertisements for services provided by professional women. Following Mill's presentation of the women's petition for suffrage at the House of Commons Frances Power Cobbe made a social call on Durant to tell her of the outcome of the vote.[83] The petition itself consisted of 1,521 signatures all but seven of which were sent in individual letters of support from women and pasted to the body of the document by Bodichon.[84] One example of a personal endorsement of the service another woman could provide is found in a letter from Durant to Elizabeth Garrett.[85] A few days in advance of one of Garrett's lectures for women, Durant sent a note to the doctor offering the name of Mme. Hocédé as a reliable woman to whom young girls could be sent to have their "education finished in Paris." Garrett was well-placed to pass the information on to a large number of women.

Opportunities for self-education were afforded through groups of women who pooled their resources to hire instructors or supported lecturers. Eliza Bridell Fox organized cooperatively-financed evening sketching sessions where female artists could draw from a nude model during the 1850s.[86] Until the 1890s women were prevented from studying the undraped human body. Art schools cited impropriety as the reason for this exclusion of female students from their life classes. However, there was more at stake than Victorian sensibility. Without the necessary skills in depicting the human figure, women could not easily succeed in producing paintings and sculpture of the classical subjects which were considered the pinnacle of artistic achievement by the nineteenth-century art community.[87] Elizabeth Blackwell (and, later, Elizabeth Garrett) offered lectures, on medicine as an occupation for women and on preventive health care, which were attended by feminists anxious for better access to higher education and the professions. As a result of Blackwell's lectures urging women to become doctors (1859), Elizabeth Garrett was inspired to seek medical training.[88]

The web of feminist relationships provided emotional support and encouragement to women who, as a consequence of their opposition to the gendered order of society, were considered social misfits. During Blackwell's early months in London she faced difficulties in locating lodgings, attracting patients and making friends because public opinion was prejudiced against female doctors. Learning of her isolation, Barbara Bodichon, Nannie Leigh Smith and Bessie Rayner Parkes made an impromptu visit to her residence to introduce themselves and cheer her up. Blackwell responded gratefully to their ministrations:

> These ladies were filled with a noble enthusiasm for the responsible and practical work of women in the various duties of life. They warmly sympathised in my medical effort . . .[89]

On subsequent visits they brought flowers and paintings to brighten her drab surroundings and they helped her with the preparations for her lectures.[90] Others expressed mutual support through lifelong relationships with female companions. Cobbe lived for over thirty years with Mary Lloyd (a sculptor) who filled the void left when Cobbe's mother died.[91] In France, the painter Rosa Bonheur lived in community with Natalie Mica and Mica's mother.[92]

On the basis of what is known about the women who participated in this extensive web of relationships, Levine has argued that feminism was driven by a "woman-centredness" which transcended political, religious and, sometimes, class affiliations.[93] In her estimation, it was a need to be with women, to tackle areas of mutual concern, which drew feminists from different backgrounds together. The feminist networks amounted to an alternative culture which embodied in the private sphere the critique of society these women asserted in public.

I have shown that Victorian feminists, though predominantly middle-class, did not comprise a homogenous community. The factors which predisposed women to adopt feminist goals were many and varied and these are reflected in the personal styles individual women brought to feminist campaigns. Just as significant to an understanding of the nature of Victorian feminism are the factors which limited women's expression of their feminist values. Their reasons for wholeheartedly embracing one or more of the women's campaigns while choosing, for strategic purposes, to distance themselves from equally worthy causes have been explored by Levine, Caine and others. Yet, the specific circumstances that influenced the extent to which committed women felt capable of participating in any single aspect of feminism have received cursory attention, only. One potential consequence of this oversight is that the more visible manifestations of nineteenth-century feminism might become normative for our understanding of the movement. Consequently, the label "feminist" might be reserved for and applied to only those women who took on high-profile roles. And the unseen private and more modest contributions to the growth of feminism made by women who felt constrained to avoid the spotlight would become devalued or completely forgotten.

I propose that a more useful way of assessing any given woman's commitment to feminism would be to consider graduated levels of involvement. On a continuum of feminist activity, those women like Bodichon and Cobbe, who publicly promoted women's emancipation through a variety of campaigns would appear to stand at one extreme. At the other end of the spectrum are those who offered financial support, but for reasons of personal contingency were unable to take a more overt role.

Whereas a woman's family background could be a predisposing factor in her involvement with feminism, it equally could be an inhibiting influence. Lady Balfour did not become visibly engaged in the feminist movement until she was eight years into an unhappy marriage. Although she recorded in her autobiography that she could not recall a time when she was "not a passive believer of the rights of women," her childhood family circle did not bring her into contact with those who shared her views.[94] Banks's research reveals that many women "needed the precipitating factor of a personal contact to bring [them] . . . into active involvement in the women's movement."[95] Clearly, a community of support was not a luxury, but a necessity for the growth of feminism.

Lady Stanley's delay in undertaking an activist role also may be attributable to family pressures. It was not until after her husband's death, in 1869, that she became enmeshed in the campaign for women's education.[96] Perhaps most interesting of all is the case of Princess Louise. Queen Victoria's "clever" and "dreadfully contradictory" daughter was forced by family sanctions to keep her interest in women's issues very much out of the public eye.[97] The Princess paid a surprise visit to Elizabeth Garrett, who was preparing for her medical licensing examinations in Paris, and offered words of admiration and encouragement.[98] Louisa Garrett Anderson records the covert nature of Princess Louise's support of Elizabeth's career aspirations:

> Rumour said that Queen Victoria disapproved of the visit, made without her knowledge; at any rate it was not repeated.[99]

As far as she could, without provoking her mother's wrath, the Princess assisted feminist movements. In 1868 she prevailed upon her sister Victoria (the Crown Princess of Prussia) "to write on her behalf to Josephine Butler to offer her support" for the work with prostitutes in Liverpool.[100] In response to Butler's reply welcoming aid, Princess Louise wrote "let me know whenever any question arises in which my assistance and sympathy could be of any use to you."[101]

Middle-class concerns for reputation also imposed limits on a woman's feminist activity. While Lady Amberley was fully prepared to brave public scrutiny and ridicule, women who were obliged to earn a living had to be more cautious.[102] Speaking of Charlotte Bronte's and George Eliot's failures to fully treat feminist issues in their novels, Barbara Prentis observes that "the need to keep what today we call a 'low profile' was pressing, and in light of this it is all the more remarkable that they sometimes spoke as boldly as they did."[103] Eliot's concern for women's education can be discerned in her heroine Dorothea Brooke's pleas for training in Greek and Latin from the cleric Casaubon in Middlemarch. Although she "most emphatically [desired] to see women socially elevated--educated equally with men and secured as far as possible. . . from suffering the exercise of any unrighteous power. . .", Eliot realized that it would have served neither her career nor the cause of women's education had her name been connected with the campaign.[104] She contented herself with giving anonymous financial support to Girton College which she had to visit "by the back drive."[105] In addition to her acquaintance with Kate Amberley, Eliot's close friendship with Barbara Bodichon placed her in contact with a wide circle of feminists. It was within the relatively private realm of the feminist networks that Eliot felt able to express her solidarity with the movement.

By their very nature certain professions imposed limits upon the ways in which women communicated their feminist sympathies. Women in the theatre were normally constrained to portray characters from a circumscribed repertoire. Helena Faucit (Lady Martin) used the roles available to her to champion the cause of women, particularly those in her profession. Determined to counteract the low esteem in which female actors were held, Faucit "put in living form before her audience the types of noble womanly nature as they have been revealed by our best dramatic poets, and especially by Shakespeare."[106] Faucit may have taken her cue from Anna Jameson's book of essays, entitled Character of Women, Moral, Political and Historical, which was published in 1832. Jameson uses analyses of the female characters of Shakespeare as a means of persuading her readers that "the condition of women in society, as at present constituted, is false in itself, and injurious to them." In the preface, she disarms the wary, promising not to assail them with "essays on morality and treatises on education." Instead she enlists their cooperation, telling them that she will "illustrate certain positions by examples and leave [the] readers to deduce the moral themselves."[107]

The silent arts of painting and sculpture presented an even greater challenge to female artists who wished to improve the condition of women. Sculptors Durant and Hosmer chose heroic female characters from literature and real life to convey their solidarity with women's aspirations for social autonomy. In her monumental sculpture, Zenobia, The Queen of Palmyra (1859), Harriet Hosmer presented a once proud and capable woman who was captured by the Roman Emperor, publicly humiliated and forced to live on charity until her death.[108] The work aroused considerable acclaim and compelled its viewers to ponder the deplorable manner in which some women were treated. By contrast, Durant's bust of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1872) celebrated the strides women had made in acquiring professional credentials. Another portrait by Durant, Harriet Beecher Stowe (1857) raised important parallels between slavery and the status of women. Durant's classical figures of The Faithful Shepherdess (1863), Constance (1866), and Ruth (1869) presented stories of virtuous women prevailing against circumstances of severe adversity. These alternative methods of expressing feminist concerns had the advantage of catching viewers off guard, of changing their attitudes toward women by subtle means rather than through the direct challenges presented by polemical articles or public meetings.

Caution must be used when including such a broad spectrum of activity under the umbrella of feminism. Not all those whose efforts appear to be aimed at securing expanded rights for women may be called feminists. As Poovey points out, women could be agents of social and economic change in spite of their own antagonism to equal rights advocacy.[109] Caroline Norton's support for the Matrimonial Causes Bill (1857) indirectly galvanized other women, such as Bodichon and Parkes, to organize female efforts for further change. However, Norton was neither accepted by the women who campaigned for women's emancipation nor was she accepting of their "wild and ridiculous doctrine of equality." She maintained that "The natural position of woman is inferiority to man," thereby distancing herself also from the "essentialist" feminists such as Frances Power Cobbe and Josephine Butler who deemed women to be morally superior to men.[110] Norton waged her campaign to change the child custody and support laws almost singlehandedly, not wishing for the involvement of other women because,

> Each thinks the hardship of her own case more specially calculated to move compassion . . . They have a sort of unreasoning instinct that aggregate resistance will not serve them.[111]

This reluctance to become involved in collective female agitation flies in the face of the Victorian feminist ethos of cooperation. Other feminists had scruples about the sorts of group actions in which they were willing to participate. Emily Davies expressed strong reservations about launching a full-scale suffrage campaign in 1865 out of fear that impulsive people "who would insist on jumping like kangaroos" might get on the steering committee and "do harm."[112] Nevertheless, Davies supported the aim of suffrage and joined the London National Society for Women's Suffrage in 1886 after she was certain that Girton College was well-established and unlikely to suffer from her other feminist involvements.[113]

Perhaps it was Caroline Norton's unwillingness to enlist the assistance of women in her fight which caused Harriet Martineau to condemn her motives for legal reform as too self-serving. Alternatively, it may have been because Norton's campaign, though beneficial for a particular segment of the female population, undermined the more radically conceived campaign for married women's property rights. Parliament was more amenable to creating a law which had a limited impact on the balance of power between husbands and wives than to countenance the more thorough-going changes which would come if married women were permitted to own property.[114] It was not until 1882 that a satisfactory Married Women's Property Bill passed into law.[115] Although the end product of Caroline Norton's struggle to change the British marriage laws was an improvement in the status of some married women, the means by which she achieved that end was anti-feminist. In light of Norton's rejection of nineteenth-century feminist theory and aid, the most that can be said is that Norton unintentionally contributed to the growth of feminism by successfully attacking a law which hurt women.

Similarly, not all women's movements merit the label "feminism." Reactionary programmes, such as the anti-suffrage campaign are blatant examples, but any women's movement that does not have at its core a critique of the gendered order of society coupled with an intention to improve the social or economic position of women must be excluded from the feminist circle. Feminism must be understood as a complex of theory and practice, not practice alone.

Victorian feminism displays a unity in diversity. The movement was firmly shaped by the middle classes who dominated social reform activities in nineteenth-century Britain. This association of feminism with the perspectives of a particular class in a sharply stratified society had positive and negative effects. Negatively, feminists focused their energies on achieving benefits for female members of their own class. Consequently, a comprehensive improvement of women's lot could not be attained during the century. Positively, the ideology of the separate spheres that dominated middle-class households offered a ready-made infrastructure upon which feminism could establish itself. The web of strong female relationships engendered by segregation of the sexes formed the backbone of all feminist activity.[116] A close-knit community and a shared critique of society's treatment of women are the unifying features of the Victorian feminist movement. An examination of other social variables reveals that, although feminists tended to participate in certain experiences or associations more frequently than in others, there is no stereotypic

Victorian feminist woman. Diverse political and religious affiliations, conflicting strategies for achieving goals, differing degrees of involvement and modes of expressing feminist sympathies also characterized the membership of the movement. In addition, the activity during the Victorian period was not focused on one dominant issue or even a coherently orchestrated cluster of issues. Rather, Victorian feminism was comprised of a patchwork of campaigns loosely connected by the web of relationships which cut across the traditional boundaries of location, politics, religion, and marital status. In the next chapter, I propose to show that the women's art movement is one of the patches in the feminist quilt.

Notes

1. The campaign for a Married Women's Property Act began in 1855-56 when a petition was circulated and presented to Parliament. The efforts of the women who promulgated the married women's property campaign came to fruition in 1870 and 1882 with the passage of Married Women's Property bills. Philippa Levine, Feminist Lives in Victorian England: Private Roles and Public Commitment (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 116-118.

2. Campaigns for suffrage and women's education operated quite separately from each other. Davies chose not to be visibly associated with the suffrage issue until after Girton College was established because she thought potential supporters of women's education would be alienated. Even within a single cause divergent approaches might be taken. Emily Davies's opposition to the scheme of special university lectures for women promulgated by Henry Sidgwick, Annie Jemima Clough and Josephine Butler is an interesting case. Although the two groups were pursuing the same goal, that of higher education for women, they had very different plans for achieving that goal. Davies feared that special lectures would eventuate in a two-tiered education system with women's university training taking second place to that of men. See Levine, Feminist Lives, 78, 92, 98.

3. Barbara Caine, Victorian Feminists (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 209. Levine notes that Elizabeth Garrett Anderson sided with her profession over the issue, claiming that doctors were better qualified to comment on matters of public health than were others. Levine, Feminist Lives, 101.

4. Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach," Signs 14, no. 1 (1988): 126-127.

5. Nancy Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1987), 3-4, quoted in Levine, Feminist Lives, 2.

6. Offen, "Defining Feminism," 126.

7. Olympe de Gouges presented her Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne, which was patterned after the Déclaration des droits de l'homme, in 1791. Claire Goldberg Moses, French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1984), 10. Moved by the efforts of Olympe de Gouges, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote her Vindication of the Rights of Woman in

1792. Although she implicitly maintained a division of roles for men and women, Wollstonecraft nevertheless attacked the tendency of men to demean women and appealed for equitable treatment of women as befit rational creatures. Concurrently, Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel put forward an enlightenment-influenced demand for the equal treatment of women in his Über die bürgeliche verbesserung der Weiber (On Improving the Status of Women) in Germany. Ruth P. Dawson, "And this Shield is Called--Self-Reliance: Emerging Feminist Consciousness in the Late Eighteenth Century" in German Women in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A social and Literary History, Ruth-Ellen B. Joeres and Mary Jo Maynes, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 157-158, 167.

8. Harriet Martineau's article "On Female Education" (1823) is cited as one of many on the subject which were published in the Monthly Repository, a Unitarian journal. Alice S. Rossi, ed., The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1973), 186.

9. Quoted in Moses, French Feminism, 102.

10. Although the English Woman's Journal changed hands, and names, at least thrice during the nineteenth century, it retained an emphasis on the need for women's employment. Beginning in May 1864 the journal was known as The Alexandra Magazine and Woman's Social and Industrial Advocate. When this venture foundered it was replaced by The Englishwoman's Review: a Journal of Woman's Work in October 1866 only to be changed two years later to The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions.

11. Jane Rendall, The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860 (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), 187.

12. Both articles can be found reprinted in Candida Ann Lacey, ed., Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and the Langham Place Group (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987). Hereafter I will refer to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon by her married name regardless of her marital status at the time under discussion.

13. Barbara Leigh Smith, "A Brief Summary, in Plain Language, of the most Important Laws Concerning Women: Together with a Few Observations Thereon" in Bodichon and Langham Place, ed. Lacey (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 31.

14. Carol Bauer and Lawrence Ritt, eds., Free and Ennobled: Source Readings in the Development of Victorian Feminism (Oxford: Pergamon, 1979); Patricia Hollis, ed., Women In Public 1850-1900: Documents of the Victorian Women's Movement (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979); Janet Horowitz Murray, Strong-Minded Women and Other Lost Voices from Nineteenth-Century England (New York: Pantheon, 1982); and Rossi, ed., The Feminist Papers. This is not an exhaustive list. The phrase "the woman question" was used during the nineteenth century to refer to issues concerning women. It appears to have been used both descriptively and pejoratively. For references to the use of the term see Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, 272; and Theodore Stanton, ed., The Woman Question in Europe (London, 1884).

15. "Women's rights" was a well-known phrase during the nineteenth century; proponents referred to themselves as "women's righters." Levine, Feminist Lives, 147.

16. Rossi, ed., The Feminist Papers, 184, 193.

17. Although the origins of the word "féminisme" are indefinite, sufficient literature which promoted women's emancipation and/or offered a critique of male domination exists in advance of the appearance of the word in the French press to suggest that the invention of the word postdated the invention of the concept. Offen convincingly refutes the notion that Charles Fourier introduced the word into the lexicon while affirming that his ideas (1808) about the rights of women "would clearly qualify as "feminist" concepts even by today's standards." Offen, "Defining Feminism," 126, n.15.

18. Helen Taylor to Barbara Bodichon, 7 August 1869, quoted in Philippa Levine, Victorian Feminism 1850-1900 (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1987), 15.

19. Offen, "Defining Feminism," 130-132; Rosalind Delmar, "What is Feminism?" in What is Feminism?, eds. Mitchell and Oakley (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 9-11; and Moses, French Feminism, 7.

20. Delmar, "What is Feminism?," 8-9.

21. Rowbotham voices the concern that anachronistic use of the label "feminist" may amount to colonization of the past by well-meaning women's studies departments. By emphasizing the temporal proximity between the emergence of the

label and the social situation which gave it birth, and by calling for a definition of "feminism," in the context of this thesis, which acknowledges the particularities of the Victorian movement, I hope to avoid this pitfall. Sheila Rowbotham, Women in Movement: Feminism and Social Action (New York: Routledge, 1992), 12.

22. In addition, there is a danger in singling out stages in the development of the feminist movement and privileging them as exemplars of "full or true consciousness," as Levine has cautioned with reference to Cott's exclusive use of "feminism." Levine, Feminist Lives, 2.

23. Linda Nochlin, Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 2-3.

24. "Essentialist" is a twentieth-century term for the branch of feminist theory that maintains that there are innate characteristics (over and above the obvious physical differences) which distinguish the sexes. Women are encouraged to celebrate and promote the social importance of those characteristics which are essentially female. Victorian feminists like Frances Power Cobbe and Josephine Butler subscribed to this view.

25. Offen, "Defining Feminism," 134 passim; and Nancy Cott, "Feminist Theory and Feminist Movements: The Past Before Us" in What is Feminism?, eds. Mitchell and Oakley, 51, 59.

26. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 7.

27. Ibid., 76, 138. A quarrel over the use of vivisection in science lectures at Girton College in the late 1870s caused a permanent rift in the friendship between Emily Davies and Frances Power Cobbe.

28. Ibid., 95.

29. Levine, Feminist Lives, 41. Levine's data reveals a readiness among nineteenth-century feminists to transcend the normal boundaries of religious and political affiliation. Although the question of inherent similarity or difference between the sexes is not specifically raised in her study, the women she names as members of particular social circles or campaigns do not appear to divide into camps of equality supporters or difference advocates. Ideological differences, like political differences, took a subordinate position to the larger goal of achieving a better position for women in society.

30. Ibid., 65.

31. Twentieth-century definitions of the feminist enterprise written by Cott, Offen, Gordon and Moses exhibit the same elements of critique, example and change. See the summary of Cott's views in Caine, *Victorian Feminists*, 6-7; Offen, "Defining Feminism," 152; Linda Gordon's definition of feminism quoted in Levine, *Feminist Lives*, 2; and Moses, *French Feminism*, 7.

32. Frances Power Cobbe, "Wife Torture in England," *Contemporary Review* 23 (1878): 56-87 excerpted in *Strong-Minded Women and Other Lost Voices from Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. Janet Horowitz Murray (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 121-123. This article was written in connection with the drive to reform the Matrimonial Causes Act. The revised law, which was promulgated in 1878, gave abused wives legal protection from their husbands if they separated from their abusers.

33. Rendall, *Origins of Modern Feminism*, 322.

34. Levine's sample shows an overwhelmingly middle-class bias in Victorian feminism. Levine, *Feminist Lives*, 48. The only real challenge to the middle-class values espoused by the Victorian women's movements was brought by the socialist tradition which, Banks claims, "was the most whole-heartedly feminist, though it had the smallest part to play in nineteenth-century feminism." Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as Social Movement* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981), 58. Working-class women became politically active in the Chartist campaign but the focus of their efforts was reform for the men of their class, not for women's rights as a distinct issue. See Rendall, *Origins of Modern Feminism*, 241-243.

35. Kathleen E. McCrone, "The Assertion of Women's Rights in Mid-Victorian England," *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers* (1972): 39-40.

36. Bodichon established the Portman Hall School in 1854 to provide progressive education to children of differing classes and both sexes for the reasonable fee of sixpence a week. She was joined in this endeavour by feminist friend Elizabeth Whitehead. Although Portman Hall was a step in the direction of cross-class education reform, it is vastly overshadowed by Bodichon's efforts to secure a better education for girls from the middle classes. Her article "Middle Class Schools for Girls" (*English Woman's Journal*, November 1860) criticizes the poor level of instruction afforded to girls from comfortable families. Her subsequent involvement

with the campaign to establish Girton College was also aimed at women from her own class. Jacquie Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon: Integrity in Diversity" in Feminist Theorists, ed. Dale Spender (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 98-99, 120.

37. Levine, Feminist Lives, 137.

38. Mill's proposed amendment to the 1867 Reform Bill substituted the word "persons" for "men". No attempt to challenge the property qualifications was made at the time. See Rowbotham, Women in Movement, 70.

39. Emily Davies voiced the tactical considerations which would be served by limiting the demand for suffrage to single women with property qualifications. Davies's comment in a letter to Helen Taylor, 18 July 1866 (Mill-Taylor Collection XIII, II, London School of Economics), is quoted in Levine, Victorian Feminism, 67. By contrast, Agnes Davis Prochin (author of the pamphlet "The Right of Women to Exercise the Elective Franchise" 1855) advocated a form of gender equality which did not transcend class distinctions on principle. See Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, 312.

40. McCrone, "Women's Rights," 45.

41. The slave-trade in Britain was abolished in 1807 but campaigning continued until slavery was outlawed in all Britain's possessions. Twenty seven per cent of those feminists who were born before 1828 had participated in anti-slavery activities. Olive Banks, Becoming a Feminist: The Social Origins of "First Wave" Feminism (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1986), 35.

42. Levine, Feminist Lives, 17.

43. J.F.C. Harrison, "The Victorian Gospel of Success," Victorian Studies 1, no. 2 (December 1957): 160.

44. J.H.Treble, Urban Poverty in Britain 1830-1914 (London, 1979).

45. Ibid., 156; and Olive Banks, Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981), 34.

46. When the Representation of the People Bill was before the House of Commons, 27-29 March 1867, three petitions "For Extension of the Elective Franchise to

Women" were presented by the bill's supporters Russell Gurney, H.A.Bruce and John Stuart Mill. "The first was signed by 1,605 women who would, had they been men, have had the necessary voting qualifications, the other two by 3,559 and 3,000 men and women. . ." Erna Reiss, Rights and Duties of Englishwomen; a Study in Law and Public Opinion (Manchester: Sherratt and Hughes, 1934), 192.

47. The construction of the Royal Albert Hall was partially financed by subscriptions. See Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. Cole, Henry.

48. Lady Stanley of Alderley contributed substantial sums of money and considerable time to Girton College. Levine, Feminist Lives, 25.

49. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 234. Levine notes that Elmy was finally persuaded to marry by her feminist friends. Levine, Victorian Feminism, 67.

50. George Henry Lewes's Journal, 5 May 1867, in ed. Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-1978), 4:360.

51. Harriet Grote to J.S.Mill, October 1867, quoted in M.L. Clarke, George Grote: a Biography (London: University of London, the Athlone Press, 1962), 94; and Russell and Russell, The Amberley Papers, 1:478.

52. Elinor Rice Hays, Those Extraordinary Blackwells (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), 173.

53. Kate Amberley's diary, 21 February 1865. Bertrand Russell and Patricia Russell, eds., The Amberley Papers (1937; repr. New York: Simon and Schuster; London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), 1:375.

54. Kate Amberley's determination to visit with George Eliot amounted to a private defiance of the double standard of morality. Because he was a man, Lewes was perfectly at liberty to go about in society, meeting people and dining with them without concern for appearances. Disapproval fell much harder on Eliot's behaviour merely because she was a woman.

55. Levine, Feminist Lives, 16.

56. Ibid., 27.

57. Ibid., 23. In contrast to Banks's view that fathers wielded more influence in the lives of feminists, Levine cites a considerable list of mothers who inculcated feminist ideals in their daughters.

58. Ibid., 17-19; Banks, Becoming a Feminist, 139-140; and Rendall, The Origins of Modern Feminism, 315.

59. Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, 314; and Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 3.

60. Benjamin Leigh Smith, Joseph Parkes, Joseph Sturge and Samuel Blackwell were radicals or liberals and Dissenters. Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, 314-315; and Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 3.

61. For a thorough treatment of the contribution made by religion to the development of feminism see Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, chapter 3 passim.

62. Banks, Becoming a Feminist, 15.

63. Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, 322.

64. Ibid., 322-323.

65. Banks, Becoming a Feminist, 14.

66. Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 10.

67. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 203-204.

68. Levine, Victorian Feminism, 32-33.

69. Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, 314.

70. Levine, Feminist Lives, 62.

71. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," in The "Signs" Reader of Women, Gender and Scholarship, eds. Elizabeth Abel and Emily K. Abel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 36-37.

72. Aina Rubenius, The Woman Question in Mrs. Gaskell's Life and Works (1950; repr. New York: Russell and Russell, 1973), chapter 3 passim. Other sources of information about Mrs. Gaskell's family and friends are Ellis H. Chadwick, Mrs. Gaskell, Haunts, Homes and Stories (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1913); and Elizabeth Haldane, Mrs. Gaskell and Her Friends (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931).

73. Levine, Feminist Lives, 25.

74. Blackwell mentioned her friendship with Anna Jameson in a letter to her sister Emily, 4 April 1851. Mary St. John Fancourt, They Dared to be Doctors (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1965), 184.

75. Rubenius, Woman Question in Mrs. Gaskell, 39.

76. Russell and Russell, The Amberley Papers, 1:314; Susan Durant to George Durant, 1 January 1865, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 5; and Harriet Grote to Frances von Koch, 31 October 1861 and 22 February 1863, in The Lewin Letters, ed. Lewin, 241-242, 249.

77. Mary Beecher Perkins to Thomas Clap Perkins, 17-26 November [1856], Transcription. Stowe-Day Foundation Library Collections, Hartford Connecticut; and Annie Fields, ed., Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1897), 207.

78. Ellis H. Chadwick, Mrs. Gaskell, Haunts, Homes and Stories (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons Ltd., 1913), 198; and Jane Whitehill, ed., Letters of Mrs. Gaskell and Charles Eliot Norton 1855-1865 (London: Oxford University Press; Humphrey Milford, 1932), 3.

79. Joseph Leach, Bright Particular Star: the Life and Times of Charlotte Cushman (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1970), 290.

80. Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 136.

81. Levine, Feminist Lives, 65.

82. Ibid., 61-62. The Kensington Society membership roll reads like a feminist "Who's Who." For information about the offshoots of the Langham Place Circle see Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon: Integrity in Diversity," in Feminist Theorists, ed. Dale Spender (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 97-98; and Josephine Kamm, Rapiers and Battleaxes: The Women's Movement and Its Aftermath (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), 95-96, 104.

83. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 22 May [1866], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 127.

84. Public Petition no. 8501 (7 July 1866), "For Extension of the Elective Franchise to All Householders without Distinction of Sex," Reports of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, 1866, 697 and (for the text of the petition) Petitions Appendix, 334:305. Mill describes his presentation of the petition. John Stuart Mill, Autobiography in Essential Works of John Stuart Mill, ed. Max Lerner (New York: Bantam, 1971 ed.), 176-177.

85. Susan Durant to Elizabeth Garrett, n.d., Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University, London. On the basis of Durant's return address the letter dates no earlier than June or July 1866, when she moved to Bryanston Square (Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 11 May 1866, refers to signing of lease, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 68) and no later than 1871 when Elizabeth Garrett married and changed her name (Anne Crawford et al., eds., Biographical Dictionary of British Women (London: Europa Publications, 1983), s.v. Anderson, Elizabeth Garrett.).

86. Charlotte Yeldham, Women Artists in Nineteenth-century France and England (New York: Garland, 1984), 1:21. Jan Marsh and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Women Artists and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement (London: Virago, 1989), 27.

87. Yeldham, Women Artists in France and England, 1:21, 31, 33, 35, 40.

88. Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, 135.

89. Fancourt, They Dared to Be Doctors, 175.

90. Ibid., 218.

91. "Of a friendship like this, which has been to my later life what my mother's affection was to my youth, I shall not be expected to say more." Frances Power Cobbe, Life of Frances Power Cobbe as told by Herself (London: Swan, Sonnenschein and Co., 1904), 393.

92. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 121.

93. Levine, Feminist Lives, 74.

94. Lady Frances Balfour, Ne Obliviscaris. Dinna Forget (1930), 114 quoted in Levine, Feminist Lives, 20.

95. Banks, Becoming a Feminist, 139-140.

96. Barbara Stephen, Emily Davies and Girton College (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1927), 370-371.

97. Queen Victoria to the Crown Princess of Prussia, 9 January 1867 reprinted in Roger Fulford, ed., Your Dear Letter: Private Correspondence of Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess of Prussia 1865-1871 (London: Evans Bros., 1971), 114.

98. Sophia Jex-Blake to Dr. Sewall, 21 March 1861: "Princess Louise went to see [Elizabeth Garrett], and after enquiring about the medical prospects of women, expressed strong hopes of their complete success. This is really worth a great deal and I hope you will have too much sense to sneer at it." Quoted in Margaret Todd, The life of Sophia Jex-Blake (London: Macmillan, 1918), 232, original source not cited.

99. Louisa Garrett Anderson, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson 1836-1917 (London: Faber and Faber, 1939), 130. Princess Louise must have held strong convictions about the importance of female doctors. Her visit to Garrett amounted to open defiance of her mother's expressed abhorrence of the "mad and utterly demoralizing movement of the present day to place women in the same position as to profession--as men;--& amongst others, in the Medical line . . . " (Queen Victoria to W.E.Gladstone, 6 May 1870, in Free and Ennobled: Source Readings in the Development of Victorian Feminism, eds. Carol Bauer and Lawrence Ritt [Oxford: Pergamon, 1979], 247).

100. Jehanne Wake, Princess Louise: Queen Victoria's Unconventional Daughter (London: Collins, 1988), 95.

101. Princess Louise to Josephine Butler, 22 March 1869, quoted in Wake, Princess Louise, 95-96.

102. Michael St. John Packe, The Life of John Stuart Mill (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954), 498-499.

103. Barbara Prentis, The Bronte Sisters and George Eliot: A Unity of Difference (London: Macmillan, 1988), 147.

104. George Eliot to Clementia Taylor, 30 May 1867, in George Eliot Letters, ed. Haight, 4:366.

105. Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon," 111.

106. Theodore Martin, Helena Faucit (Lady Martin) (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1900), 166 quoted in Christopher Kent, "Image and Reality: the Actress and Society" in A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 99.

107. Rubenius, Woman Question in Mrs.Gaskell, 43-44. Jameson's interpretation of the female characters of Shakespeare is applauded in a review article in the Edinburgh Review, 60 (1834-5): 180-6 quoted in Clara Thomas, Love and Work Enough: The Life of Anna Jameson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 69.

108. Joseph Leach, "Harriet Hosmer: Feminist in Bronze and Marble," The Feminist Art Journal, 5 (Summer 1976): 13.

109. Mary Poovey, Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 21.

110. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 52, 130, 176.

111. Caroline Norton, A Letter to the Queen on Lord Cranworth's Marriage and Divorce Bill (1855); and Jane Perkins, The Life of Mrs. Norton (London: John Murray, 1910), 8 quoted in Margaret Forster, Significant Sisters: The Grassroots of Active Feminism 1839-1939 (London: Penguin, 1984), 16, 17. Forster is the only writer on Victorian feminism who champions the view that "to say [Norton] was not a feminist is to misunderstand, with her, the nature of feminism."

112. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 84.

113. Ibid., 78.

114. Levine, Victorian Feminism, 135.

115. Ibid., 139.

116. "Feminism as a social movement, therefore, must be seen on one level as a network of such groups from which in their turn the organizers of the movement sprang." Olive Banks, Becoming a Feminist, 139-140.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WOMEN'S ART MOVEMENT

The mid-nineteenth century witnessed the rise of a women's art movement unparalleled in British history. Census data for the period from 1841 to 1871 indicates a 284 per cent increase in the number of women who declared themselves to be workers in the "fine arts."[1] However, the relevance of this phenomenon to feminist history has not been adequately examined.

In Victorian Women Artists Pamela Gerrish Nunn notes that the women's art movement emerged at roughly the same time as other women's movements, especially those associated with women's work.[2] But the links between these other identifiably feminist movements and the women's art movement are barely explored, leaving a conspicuous hole in the fabric of Victorian feminist history. Instead, Nunn focuses on the suppression of women's art and art history by the male art establishment; her concern is to attack the discriminatory attitudes which marked the nineteenth century and spilled over into the twentieth. She describes the various means by which the Academy attempted to prevent women from becoming professional artists.[3] However, while the women's ingenuity in overcoming these obstacles is documented, it is not evaluated in relation to the actions of women outside the art community who met and tackled similar challenges to their autonomy. For instance, female doctors handled opposition to their professional aspirations in much the same ways as did the female artists. Even when Nunn ventures to connect particular aspects of the women's art movement with feminism, she equivocates to the point of minimizing the importance of the data. Her description of the Society of Female Artists is revealing.

> [The SFA] was certainly seen, at the start, as a feminist movement--if by that is meant that it was seen to be a blow struck for women's rights--and, although the names associated with its establishment do not read as a list of front-line "women's righters," and one should not assume that any woman who supported the Society necessarily supported the feminism of the late 1850s, the fact that the Society of Female Artist's woman power included Harriet Grote . . . Bodichon . . . Mrs. Robertson Blaine. . . and that it counted among its exhibitors Bessie Parkes and Ellen Blackwell, indicates that the Society had the blessing of progressive women of the mid-century.[4]

The tentative nature of this statement is compounded by an incomplete investigation of the SFA's origins and of the standing within the feminist community of the women named here.

Both Philippa Levine and Olive Banks write about the activities of female artists such as Barbara Bodichon and Anna Mary Howitt, but minimize their contributions as artists in favour of their involvement in other feminist initiatives. A more integrative approach to female artists and their engagement with the events and issues of their time is necessary. John Crabbe and Jacquie Matthews have both taken some steps in this direction with regard to the life and work of Barbara Bodichon.[5] In this chapter I will examine the relationship between the women's art movement and Victorian feminism.

The women's art movement must be understood in relation to two important aspects of Victorian culture, the fine arts enterprise and feminism. In the last chapter I traced the shape of Victorian feminism. Before analyzing the connections between female artists and feminism it is necessary to become familiar with the place of art in Victorian society. In this regard, I have chosen the word "enterprise" purposely to emphasize the aggressive role assigned to the visual arts in nineteenth-century Britain.

Although the monarchy and aristocracy retained their status as collectors and connoisseurs of European "Old Master" paintings, their traditional monopoly in matters of taste was rivalled by the involvement of government and the wealthy middle class in art patronage and promotion. Two Parliamentary commissions, the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures (1835-36) and the Select Committee on the Promotion of the Fine Arts (1841), fostered new trends in the British art world.

The first of these committees paved the way for the industrialization of art.[6] Its mandate was to examine the state of art in Britain and other countries, "as manifested in their different manufactures," and to determine the "best means of extending among the People, especially the Manufacturing Classes, a knowledge of and taste for Art."[7] Following Committee recommendations, the government founded Schools of Design to train a class of industrial artisans and ensured that the National Gallery and (later) the South Kensington Museum were freely accessible to the public.[8] Working men were encouraged to attend exhibitions of art and industry (notably the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857) and enrol in the new schools so as to improve the quality of the fancy manufactured goods they produced. Creators of ornamental fire grates, silk jacquard fabrics, wall paper patterns and china tableware, among others, received instruction in drafting and design.

Enlightened self-interest prompted industrialists to take an active role in developing "taste" among their factory operatives. Those located within reach of a Branch School of Design sent their pattern-makers to be properly trained and paid an annual subscription to cover the school's operating costs.[9] Some took the initiative to furnish small art galleries which they annexed to mills or Mechanics' Institutes.[10] On a much grander scale, industrial magnates from Manchester organized the Art Treasures Exhibition, securing loans of beautiful pieces of art from collectors and facilitating attendance by factory workers through a combination of reduced admission, time off and special transportation arrangements.

By such means, art was enlisted to assist industry to maintain the preeminence of British manufactured goods in domestic and foreign markets. One of the by-products of this program was a heightened awareness of the importance of art in everyday life, especially its utility in providing a source of income. The impact of this reality was felt most among working-class men but it also had unanticipated ramifications for middle-class women who found themselves in need of a paid occupation. The reasons why women wished to become professional artists will be discussed later in this chapter.

A significant number of those commissioners who decreed that art should become the servant of industry also sat on the Select Committee on the Promotion of the Fine Arts in 1841. This Commission was charged with the responsibility of elevating the British art industry to a level of excellence befitting the most powerful nation in the world. In order to achieve this aim, public recognition had to be given to the skills of British artists and untapped markets for their art had to be developed. Government funds were designated to pay for the decoration of public buildings with uplifting scenes from British history, depicted by home-grown artists. A misguided plan to use the medium of fresco was mitigated by a successful competition for sculptures to ornament the exterior of the new Houses of Parliament.[11] Artists reaped ongoing benefits as the government's example of patronage was emulated by various national and civic bodies which conducted similar competitions or collected funds to commission monuments for public places.[12]

The decision of the Select Committee to promote indigenous art was not so much the inauguration of a trend as the recognition of one that had been building since the turn of the century. Industrial magnates, chary of purchasing fraudulent

"Old Masters" and unschooled in the finer points of connoisseurship, preferred to patronize living British artists.[13] In addition, they promoted indigenous art to a larger section of the population either by bequeathing their collections to the nation or providing working men's galleries.

Probably the most ingenious means of establishing a market for British art was the art union.[14] One of the distinguished art experts who was invited to testify before the Commission was Gustav Waagen, the Director of the Berlin Museum. Among his recommendations to the Select Committee of 1835-36 for the inculcation of art appreciation among the masses was the establishment of kunstvereine whereby works of art could be won through a lottery.[15] Under the initiative of private individuals, some of them commissioners to the 1835-36 committee, the Art Union of London pursued its aim of obtaining for "the multitude the pure enjoyment of art by making cheap art good, and good art universal."[16] Prize-holders received vouchers for fixed sums with which to purchase a work of art from a recognized London exhibition; the element of choice in this arrangement is significant. Recipients were required to make aesthetic judgments and, because unspent monies reverted to the Art Union, they frequently augmented the prize amount with their own money to purchase a more expensive item. Through this exercise, many people of moderate means were tempted into art patronage. Because the Art Union of London was successful in attracting participants (subscriptions in 1847 reached the dizzying figure of £17,871), exhibiting societies sought to be included on its list of recommended sources for prizes.[17] In 1858 the Society of Female Artists lobbied for and was granted the status of an approved prize venue.[18]

The impact of these projects for the establishment of an indigenous art industry was considerable. Sales at the five major London exhibitions increased sixteen fold between 1837 and 1844 .[19] This trend continued and the Art Union of London insisted that such changes were directly due to its art-promotion efforts. Others disagreed with this assessment, citing the influence of the Schools of Design, better educational opportunities, and increased access for the public to art exhibitions (Great Exhibition of 1851, Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857), as the impetus behind such figures.[20] Certainly, the aggregate effect of these programs was a greater appreciation for and a desire to possess art among the populace.

In the midst of all the changes perpetrated by the government and industrialists, the Royal Academy of Arts remained a solid monument to conservatism; "a select aristocracy of a limited number" according to Prince Albert.[21] No doubt, those who exhibited at the Royal Academy shows profited from the growing public interest in local artists, a trend which the Academy took some pains to foster.[22] However, this appears to be the sole concession to change that was willingly made by the governing members of this august body. Although no regulation prohibited the admission of women to the Academy School (which was funded by the public purse) and two of the charter members of the Academy had been women, female artists were customarily excluded. For most of the nineteenth century the School successfully resisted incursions from members of the lower classes and the opposite sex. The exclusion of men from the humbler classes was achieved by requiring a portfolio of works displaying the skills which were normally taught by drawing-masters. When the Schools of Design were instituted, great pains were taken by those Royal Academicians who were enlisted to govern them to prevent design students from obtaining the sort of classical training accepted by the Royal Academy.[23]

In 1860 the Academicians faced an unanswerable challenge to their policy of rejecting female applicants. Coached by Sir Charles Eastlake, who was elected President of the Royal Academy in 1859, Laura Hereford submitted an application to the Academy Schools identifying herself by her first initial and surname only. She received word that her work was judged to be of sufficient merit to secure her a place in the school in 1860.[24] When the Academicians learned that L.Hereford was a woman they attempted to rescind their decision but were shamed into letting it stand. Thereafter women's enrolment was sharply restricted and no female artist was inducted as a Royal Academician until 1922 when Annie Swynnerton became an Associate of the Royal Academy.[25]

That the government and members of the middle-class élite used art as a mechanism for social control has been well-documented.[26] The formation of the Select Committees and speedy execution of their recommendations were prompted by well-founded anxieties about the economic and social stability of the nation. With the enactment of the Reform Bill in 1832, middle-class ascendency was becoming a political reality as surely as it was an economic fact. In its train came demands from the working classes for ratification of a People's Charter which would grant them a slice of political power. Fearful that class boundaries would be breached and anarchy would ensue, those who held economic and political sway invoked the moral and uplifting potential of art to pacify the populace. In Peel's words,

> In the present times of political excitement, the exacerbation of angry and unsocial feelings might be much softened by the effects which the fine arts have ever produced upon the minds of men.[27]

By means of exposing the working classes to the visual arts and offering them carefully controlled opportunities to participate in their production, the government and the capitalists contrived to give workers the illusion of upward mobility without altering the class structure.

In much the same manner, middle-class women were given limited access to art training: just enough to produce virtuous compliance with their "masters'" wishes for an accomplished domestic "angel", not enough to enable them to supersede their ordained place in society.[28] Women were encouraged to believe that the pretty pastimes of drawing and watercolour painting fostered the delicate sensibilities and moral superiority for which their sex was esteemed. In the economy of the separate spheres, an appreciation of the beauty of the natural world and a charming ability to record it were highly valued commodities; particularly as they offset the harsh, mechanical environment of the public sphere. A woman's proper ambition in life was to create a lovely haven to which her husband and sons could retire and be morally replenished after a day of engagement with the corrupting influence of power.[29] Serious employment, as an artist or otherwise, would make competing demands upon a woman's time and confer a measure of independence likely to disrupt this domestic idyll. Thus, through the vehicle of watered-down art training leisured women and factory operatives alike were prepared to fulfil their designated roles in the Victorian social structure.

By mid-century, few sectors of the populace had escaped exposure to the industrial, nationalistic and civilizing benefits of British art. A significantly larger portion of the population was employed in positions requiring education in industrial or academic art than had been the case fifty years earlier. In support of this trend, a wider cross-section of society was induced to buy British-school paintings and sculpture. Middle-class values of morality and social order had been urged upon the masses through the vehicle of art practice and appreciation.

W.C.Taylor, an Inspector for the Schools of Design from 1845, described the object of exposing the working classes to fine art in his article "On the Cultivation of Taste in the Operative Classes" (1849): "We believe that the moral and social results of developing and elevating the taste of the artisan are of the highest importance to morality and society."[30]

In conjunction with these trends came a demographic shift which significantly altered women's prospects of marriage and motherhood. During the 1850s there was a sharp decline in marriages, particularly among men and women of middle-class origins. Men were deferring matrimony until later in life or declining to marry altogether. This trend endured for over thirty years; 1881 census figures show that only one out of roughly six middle-class women between the ages of 20-25 was married.[31] In an article by William Rathbone Greg, "Why Are Women Redundant?" (1862), four reasons for the decline in marriage are suggested.[32] These are: large scale male emigration to the colonies, a selfish concern to amass wealth unhindered by family demands, a desire on the part of men to have sexual pleasure without the attendant responsibilities of a wife and children, and the rejection of marriage by strong-minded women. The Crimean War (1854-56) in which 25,000 men lost their lives and many more were disabled would also have affected the marriage statistics.[33] Scores of women, who under normal circumstances would have been able to rely on a husband's income, were forced to remain under their fathers' care or become self-supporting. The generally poor state of their education and the social stigma attached to manual labour severely restricted their employment options. Women knew there was money to be made from art-production; government propaganda about the place of art in industry and the value of the contribution made by British artists to the domestic economy had made that abundantly clear. Consequently, those who had shown any talent at sketching or painting turned to art as a "genteel" means of earning a livelihood.

Nunn relies heavily on the "redundancy" issue as a central causal factor of the rise of the women's art movement. While it undoubtedly had a significant impact upon women's decisions to become professional artists, it should not be overemphasized. Throughout the course of the nineteenth century, women were exposed to political, literary and philosophical arguments in favour of greater personal autonomy. Becoming an artist was a means of asserting independence and making an impression on the world for many of the women named in Nunn's books. Susan Durant exemplifies this drive for self-realization.

As was noted in Chapter One, women who were exposed to progressive political and intellectual influences in their childhood homes tended to evince a strong interest in non-traditional occupations. Eliza Fox and Barbara Bodichon were feminist artists who grew up surrounded by the radicals and freethinkers their fathers invited home for discussion evenings in the 1830s and 1840s. Bodichon's father was radical MP Benjamin Leigh Smith. Fox's father, William J.Fox, was the editor of the Monthly Repository, a Unitarian journal. He entertained people with progressive ideas about the status of women. J.S.Mill and Harriet Taylor first met each other at his home.[34]

Others, like the American Harriet Hosmer, were attracted to the profession first and developed an ideological stance when faced with resistance to their wishes. Raised by her widower father, Hosmer was as adept at outdoor sports activities as she was at modelling figures from clay. Her adventuresome spirit and obvious talent for the physically demanding art of sculpture led her to seek training as an artist. The rebuffs she received from the medical schools to which she had applied for anatomy training in 1849 hardened her resolve to express her talent, openly defying the social strictures placed on women.[35]

Whatever the motivation, female artists were able to capitalize on the increased market for British-school painting and sculpture which had been so effectively cultivated by means of the major exhibitions and lotteries of the 1840s and 1850s. Certainly the Society of Female Artists recognized and made good use of this trend by applying for acceptance as an approved source of Art Union of London prizes.

The fortuitous combination of circumstances which enabled the development of a women's art movement did not proceed unhindered. The separate sphere ideology and the Royal Academy of Arts were powerful countervailing forces which conspired to undermine women's aspirations for artistic careers. Yeldham, Nunn and Greer have each made detailed presentations of the obstacles placed in the way of women's attempts to become professional painters or sculptors.[36] Briefly stated, the three major stumbling blocks women had to surmount were: restricted access to art education, few exhibition opportunities, and the application of a double standard of evaluation for women's work and men's work. Remarkably undaunted by these impediments, female artists launched a counter-offensive which bears a striking resemblance to the efforts of their sisters who sought access to higher education, the medical profession, and equality under the law. In the following section I will examine the relationship between the women's art movement and feminism.

One of the difficulties encountered in researching the women's art movement is the dearth of information available on the individual participants. Even the most successful or best-connected female artists are barely documented, making it hard to gain a complete understanding of their role in the movement. As a group, Victorian female artists appear to have been bound together by two common features. They were members of the middle and upper-middle classes (the same sector of society responsible for the rise of feminism in Britain) and they shared a strong determination to resist social sanctions against careers for women. Otherwise, they represented the full economic spectrum of their class and reflected the range of political sympathies of the time, although a significant concentration of liberals and radicals can be discerned among their ranks. Barbara Bodichon, Anna Mary Howitt, Eliza Fox and Susan Durant all travelled in radical circles and were decidedly progressive in their politics. Those at the forefront of the women's art movement were frequently associated with one or more of the other women's rights movements of the period. Anna Jameson, Harriet Grote, Bodichon, Howitt, and Fox were variously involved with the Married Women's Property petition, the Girton College campaign, and the suffrage societies, among others. A fuller discussion of the characteristics of Victorian female artists will be presented later in this chapter.

As Nunn has pointed out, by virtue of becoming an artist a woman of the Victorian era conveyed the opinion that the middle-class concept of femininity, as expressed in the ideal of the "perfect lady," was not acceptable.[37] Moreover, the female artist presented a challenge to the exclusive position enjoyed by members of the male art establishment, particularly if she was talented. In a general sense, then, the decision to become an artist could have been seen as an act of defiance against the social norms. For those women who undertook the occupation without any clearly defined feminist predisposition, the difficulties encountered in acquiring the requisite training and exhibition opportunities usually forced them to take a stand on the larger issue of women's rights.

Faced with monumental obstacles, female artists employed the same sorts of tactics to achieve their goals as women used in the campaigns to improve the legal, political or professional status of women. To compensate for their exclusion from the life classes, which formed the basis of Academic training, women shared the cost of a private model at informal evening drawing sessions. Eliza Fox was a prime instigator of these small self help groups which empowered female artists in the 1850s.[38]

Other groups arose to combat the stultifying effects of working in isolation from fellow artists. The Portfolio Club was formed in 1854 to provide a supportive environment in which women could present their literary or artistic creations and receive constructive guidance and encouragement. Bodichon and her sister Nannie met with Anna Mary Howitt, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Christina Rossetti and, occasionally, Emily Davies, to share works-in-progress and news of feminist friends.[39] In Rome starting in 1852, the actress Charlotte Cushman opened her home to Harriet Hosmer, Mary Lloyd and other expatriate female sculptors who worked in John Gibson's studio. During the 1850s and 1860s, a "flock" of American female sculptors migrated to Rome where they had greater prospects of receiving professional training and exhibiting their works than was the case in the United States. In a letter from Rome, Hosmer expressed her delight at the opportunities available to female artists:

> Here, every woman has a chance if she is bold enough to avail herself of it, and I am proud of every woman who is bold enough . . ., in spite of ridicule and criticism, [to] pave a broader way for women of the next generation.[40]

Together the women formed a supportive enclave which offered hospitality to visiting feminists like Bessie Rayner Parkes and Harriet Beecher Stowe.[41]

All too often, the art establishment undermined the progress of female artists by offering meaningless flattery or unmitigated rejection of their attempts at painting and sculpture. Anna Mary Howitt was so badly stung by John Ruskin's critical comments about one of her works that she abandoned the art profession in 1856.[42] Through groups like the Portfolio Club female artists were able to build their confidence and make use of helpful criticism to improve their work.

Charlotte Cushman's household was probably one of the models for Louisa May Alcott's fictional group of female artists studying in Paris. Alcott gives us a valuable glimpse of the workings of the female art community during the 1870s in an unfinished short story about the friendship between a sculptor (Diana) and a painter (Persis). According to Elaine Showalter, the story contains direct references to Harriet Hosmer's career.[43] Diana is credited with statues of "Saul" and "Puck," named after two of Hosmer's most successful works. Like Alcott's sister May, upon whose letters the story is based, the would-be artists had travelled to France where art training for women was more readily available. However, even in that relatively tolerant society, women's art was unfairly criticized and they had to join forces in order to succeed. Miss Cassal, a fictionalized version of May's friend Mary Cassatt, is praised by one of Alcott's artists because

> She has money and uses it nobly . . . and we have a plan in our heads to get up a school for women, a studio where we can club together and have the best models and masters and a chance to show what we can do with a clear track and fair judges.[44]

A feminist herself, Alcott populated her works with female artists who symbolized the cooperative nature of women's efforts to obtain more equitable treatment in society. ("Help one another, is part of the religion of our sisterhood").[45] One chapter of An Old Fashioned Girl, "The Sunny Side," presents the "sunny side of poverty and work," taking the reader on a tour of a studio shared by a sculptor and an engraver. The feminist convictions of the two women is evinced in the subject-matter they choose and their commitment to ongoing partnership, even though one is soon to be married. Alcott's writing testifies that the women's art movement was a significant component of nineteenth-century feminism.[46]

These small groups comprised the private side of the women's art movement. Its public face was represented by the Society of Female Artists. Organized in 1856 by Harriet Grote, the SFA (now the Society of Women Artists) was an exhibiting society that held an annual show in the spring. There, women could submit serious works of art for exhibition and sale confident that they would not be turned away because of their gender. Among all the other art exhibiting societies, the Royal

Academy of Arts and the British Institution were the only two that accepted women's work. However, the policy that allowed Royal Academicians to exhibit without restriction reduced the number of works which could be accepted from outside that institution. The remaining exhibition space was occupied by "young male students . . . many of whom have been well-trained in the elements of art in the classes of the Royal Academy itself."[47] Under these circumstances, a relatively inexperienced female artist had difficulty finding a venue in which to show her works, even if she displayed talent.

The SFA provided more than a place for female artists to exhibit their talents. It gave them an identity. Until its formation there was no institution that represented the interests of the female artists--no lobby group, no school. For this reason, the SFA is of central importance to our understanding of the women's art movement. Throughout the nineteenth century societies which supported specific feminist causes arose. For instance, shortly after the presentation of Bodichon's petition to Parliament the National Society for Women's Suffrage was constituted to focus continuing attention on the issue of votes for women. In a similar manner the SFA gave public form to the grass roots efforts of women who were trying to break into the art profession.

The timing of the emergence of this new institution is enormously significant. At the same moment that Victorian feminism took a great step forward, the Society of Female Artists was formed. Nunn sifts through events in the art world to find a reason for what she deems to be the unexpected appearance of this association. She cites, as a possible catalyst, a letter in the Builder (May 1856) suggesting to artists who were shut out of the Royal Academy shows that they form independent exhibitions of their own.[48] Josephine Kamm suggests that the expulsion of a female student from the South Kensington Art School, because she was whistling in class, incited the women to set up a society where female artists could pursue their occupation unhindered.[49] These two incidents may have contributed to an overall dissatisfaction among female artists with their treatment by the male art establishment. However, the women's rights activities of Barbara Bodichon and her coterie offer the most compelling explanation for the timing and sponsorship of the SFA.

Between 1855 and 1857 Bodichon and a group of committed women who met in her home at Blandford Square conducted a vigorous campaign to amend the Married Women's Property Act. Under its provisions, a married woman forfeited all rights to own property or keep any income she received even if she lived separately from her husband. At Bodichon's instigation, a petition against this act was circulated throughout Britain during 1855-56 and presented in March 1856 to the Houses of Parliament, with 26,000 women's signatures appended.[50] As Matthews has shown, although it failed to achieve its immediate purpose, it was resoundingly successful as a tool for raising women's awareness of the legal disabilities they endured and for inciting them to take action. In its wake the petition left an extensive infrastructure for the propagation of feminism throughout the country. In Matthews words, ". . . the new enthusiasts recruited from the provinces were to provide the basis for the nascent feminist movement."[51]

The collective that met at Blandford Square remained actively involved in women's issues after the presentation of the petition and eventually became known as the Langham Place Circle, named for 19 Langham Place where they took up offices in 1859.[52] According to Kamm and Matthews, it was through the agency of this group that a series of initiatives for gaining access to the professions was mounted. In the latter half of 1856 the SFA was organized and financed by Harriet Grote, herself an amateur painter and a strong advocate of women's rights. One year later Bodichon presented forceful arguments for women's access to paid employment, regardless of class or marital status, in her pamphlet Women and Work. Realizing that women's concerns had to be communicated to the public on a regular basis, Bodichon purchased the Waverley Journal and renamed it the English Woman's Journal in March 1858. Other enterprises followed in close succession. In 1859 came the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women and within a year Emily Faithfull opened the Victoria Press as a venue for employing women as compositors. In each case, the groups were promulgated by women who were directly associated with the Langham Place Circle, and Bodichon appears to have been personally involved in all of them.

Contra Nunn, it is not so surprising that Harriet Grote was the instigator of the SFA. As the wife of George Grote MP, a well-known radical, Harriet had an extensive acquaintance among radical and feminist social circles. Mill and his step-daughter Helen were regular visitors at her home as were A.H.Layard, the Amberleys and Susan Durant. Undoubtedly she would have been acquainted with Bodichon through her political circles and in connection with the Married Women's Property petition, which held particular importance to Harriet because of an unfortunate incident. Harriet's purse had been stolen and insult was added to injury when the constable who took the complaint recorded the theft of Mr. Grote's property. Upon learning that she had no legal status apart from her husband, Harriet assiduously opposed "the atrocious law which denies to married women all right to hold property. . ."[53]

The logical extension of the right to own property is the right of access to the means of acquiring it. Harriet and two other members of her extended family became engaged in the struggle to secure employment opportunities for women. Her niece, Jane Lewin, was an active member of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women and Jane's sister Sarah appears in the list of ladies of the Langham Place Circle.[54] Harriet's involvement in the SFA does not appear to have been motivated by a desire to take up art as a career, despite her submission of watercolours to the annual shows. Rather, it is characteristic of her interest in promoting women in the arts. Fanny Elssler, the dancer, and Jenny Lind, "the Swedish nightingale," had both been helped along in their careers by the Grotes who had introduced them to influential members of their wide social circle. Susan Durant received similar treatment. In 1864 Harriet concluded her dealings with the Society because it was a financial drain. Her comments in a letter to her sister hint at the altruism underlying the venture. "£120 out of my pocket, O la! Never mind, shall commit no more benevolent follies."[55]

There are clear indications of solidarity among these groups which emerged from Langham Place as they struggled to change public opinion and make gains for women. The English Woman's Journal was intended to provide a forum for discussions about women and work. Throughout the Journal can be found articles on women's fitness for diverse occupations and letters to the editor voicing opinions about professional employment for women. On a practical level, advertisements which appeared in the Journal presented readers with concrete opportunities to support women's work. On the inside back cover of the December 1861 issue of the English Woman's Journal is an advertisement for a new publication printed by Emily Faithfull and Co. at the Victoria Press. Readers were advised that Victoria Regia: A Volume of Original Contributions in Poetry and Prose, which was edited, compiled and composited by women, was available for purchase. The list of contributors to the volume is a curious mix of people, some of whom were decidedly not sympathetic to women's rights![56]

That the publishers of the English Woman's Journal attached considerable importance to the activities of the SFA is evident from the coverage devoted to the Society's show in the Journal's inaugural year. In an extensive article, the reviewer congratulated the SFA for:

> opening a new field for the emulation of the female student, and also a wider channel of industrial occupation, thereby relieving part of the strain now bearing heavily on the few other profitable avocations open to educated women.[57]

Works exhibited by Susan Durant, Anna Mary Howitt and Barbara Bodichon were singled out for special attention, in part because their authors were among the "best female artists, who had conquered a place in the Royal Academy."[58] These were the role-models after whom other female painters and sculptors could pattern themselves. Thereafter, news of the Society and of the activities of female artists is conscientiously reported.

Several valuable conclusions about the SFA can be drawn from this evidence. It is immediately apparent that female artists were in the vanguard of a concerted campaign for women's employment at mid-century. Although Bodichon is known best for organizing and waging campaigns for various women's causes, she also conducted a remarkably prolific and successful career as a professional artist.[59] She and the other esteemed female artists who sent works to the Society's shows used their status in the Victorian art world as a platform from which to express support for a wider sphere of occupation for women. The Society of Female Artists offered a vehicle for the public promotion of this cause and provided a safe environment within which budding artists could sell their work and learn from one another.

The Society of Female Artists, and the women's art movement which it represented, was not an isolated phenomenon. As has been noted, the milieu which conceived the SFA also gave birth to a media campaign (English Women's Journal), an employment agency (Society for Promoting the Employment of Women) and a publishing firm (Victoria Press) devoted to placing women into the workplace. Although each of these groups had its own identity, there was a symbiotic relationship between them which magnified their social impact. As well, there was a high degree of interaction between the members of the groups. Bodichon appears to have made personal contributions of advice, leadership or money to each of the initiatives mentioned. Other participants had worked together on the petition and at the Langham Place office.

Pace Nunn, the significance of the Society of Female Artists has been underestimated by feminist historians and art historians alike. It fulfilled the same role for female artists that the New Hospital for Women and Girton College did for female doctors and advocates of women's education, respectively. When excluded from the established facilities of instruction or practice in a discipline, women formed parallel institutions of their own, often with the hope that someday they would be integrated with their male counterparts. The English Woman's Journal (1858) review of the Society of Female Artists show remarks that the women's exhibition will prepare female artists to eventually exhibit at the Royal Academy:

> There is surely no harm and great good in their setting up a quieter exhibition of their own, where the same technical qualities are not as yet strictly demanded, and where patient study, and fidelity to the highest aims of art, may enable them one day to compete with the best painters, without any reference to sex.[60]

During the middle of the Victorian era the Society of Female Artists was both the rallying point for the women's art movement and an integral part of the overall feminist program.

Recognizing that alternative institutions and training arrangements had the potential to marginalize women's art, female artists continued to seek ways of infiltrating public institutions. The Schools of Design were readily accessible even though they had been created to train factory workers in the rudiments of drawing and pattern-making. Working-class enrolment in the Schools was reduced by the high weekly cost of tuition and inconvenient hours of attendance.[61] Into the vacuum created by the directors' ignorance of working-class needs came women from the middle classes who had the money and the time to spend on drawing classes. The Schools could not afford to turn away paying customers, consequently separate "ladies' classes" were provided.[62] Because life classes were not conducted at the majority of the Schools, neither the middle-class women nor those working men who wanted to become professional artists received adequate training.

The Royal Academy alone offered the sort of instruction and reputation which would provide a student with every chance of success as an artist. In 1859, thirty-eight female artists prepared a petition which they sent to every Royal Academician personally and arranged to have published in the Athenaeum on the same day. The text of the petition requested

> the members of the Royal Academy to provide accommodation in the Schools for properly qualified Female Students . . . to afford to women artists the same opportunities . . . by which they have themselves so greatly profited.[63]

Among the signatories are Barbara Bodichon, Ellen Blackwell, Anna Blunden, Eliza Fox, Anna Jameson and Bella Leigh Smith, all of whom were participants in the SFA.[64]

The Royal Academy did not alter its stance on the subject of admitting women in 1859. However, within a year a radical change took place as a result of the subterfuge employed by Laura Hereford with the encouragement of other female artists.[65] Unaware of Hereford's gender, the Academicians acknowledged that her work displayed as much talent as that of her male counterparts. "Genius," it appeared, was not confined to the male gender. The female artists had attacked the exclusive power of the art establishment on its own terms and won a small victory. Thereafter, access was limited to a handful of female applicants "as space permitted."

Most of the strategies used by the thirty-eight female artists are no different from those employed by the many pressure groups of the time. However, the ruse employed by Laura Herford has strong feminist overtones precisely because it highlights gender prejudice in the art community. Normally feminists were reluctant to pass themselves off as men, feeling that their cause would be strengthened when they achieved their aims against all odds. For this reason, Elizabeth Blackwell rejected the advice of well-meaning male friends who offered to lend her men's clothes as a disguise.

Exclusion from medical school because the work was considered unseemly for women, even deleterious to their health, was a practice which did not necessarily impugn women's abilities. Presumably if they were able to obtain training from alternative sources, women could prove their fitness to be medical practitioners. Academic qualifications for the practice of medicine could be measured against an objective standard, the written examination. No such instrument could be used to determine whether a would-be artist had the requisite skills for that profession. An artist's work had to be assessed by more subjective means, which meant that a biased judgement could not readily be challenged. The art establishment assumed women to be innately deficient in artistic talent and applied that assumption, deliberately or unconsciously, when evaluating work by a female artist. A review of Die Frauen in die Kunstgeshichte [trans. Women Artists] by Ernest Guhl (Berlin, 1858) reveals the nineteenth-century debate about women's art abilities:

> Women, say the defenders of the present system of things, have opened no new vistas in the realm of thought; with a few brilliant exceptions, they have produced nothing really great in art, science, or literature; and an exception does not form the rule. What they have not achieved during the course of eighteen centuries, they are not likely to achieve in the nineteenth. It is all very well to talk of difficulties educational &c.; but genius is repressed by none of these."[66]

The expectation that women could not produce top-quality art became a self-fulfilling prophecy. In order to prove that the Royal Academy was unfair towards women applicants, Laura Herford had to disguise her gender. A similar situation obtained for female novelists who adopted masculine noms de plume in order to get fair treatment from publishers.

The women's art movement was advanced by individual initiatives as well as collective efforts. Women from well-off families circumvented the exclusion of female artists from life classes by studying on the Continent. In France, Germany and Italy, women were given greater access to the art academies where drawing from the nude figure was permitted for either sex. Some, like Durant, Bodichon, Mary Thornycroft, and Mary Lloyd attached themselves to the ateliers of respected artists in Paris and Rome where they learned all aspects of the profession.[67] Harriet

Hosmer received her initial training for drawing the human figure in an anatomy class at the St. Louis Medical College in Missouri. Later she went to Rome where she continued her training under the direction of John Gibson, the celebrated English sculptor.[68]

Barbara Bodichon made special arrangements to have her works exhibited. She held a one-woman show (a relatively rare practice) at the Dudley gallery in 1866, where her works were frequently on display between 1865 and 1881, and she contributed to at least one other joint show.[69] Durant is also credited with showing her works at "one or two . . . [presumably private] London galleries."[70] Through their individual actions, all these women displayed a bold determination to succeed at their chosen metier. Clearly, the artistic profession was not for timid or unimaginative women.

The type of art produced by women was, often by necessity, different than that produced by men.[71] Lacking proper training in human figure drawing, some women turned to alternative subject-matter to display their talent. Rosa Bonheur's paintings of large field animals give full expression to her skill in representing motion, drama and fleshy forms without requiring her to betray the inadequacy of her schooling in representing the human figure. Human beings are present in her painting The Horse Fair (1855) but they are largely obscured by the rearing, trotting animals which they are trying to control. No one thought to prevent Bonheur from studying horses and cattle. Landscape and still life were popular genres among women artists for the same reason. Moreover, these were the characteristic subjects of accomplishment art in which all young "ladies" were trained to a modest extent.

Marriage and family responsibilities also affected the subjects women could portray. Berthe Morisot painted scenes from domestic life in France, recording the world of women peopled by her mother, sisters and children. Mary Cassatt, a single woman charged with domestic responsibilities in her parents' home, also produced paintings of everyday household life. Both painters appear to have worked within the confines of their social sphere to produce visual commentaries on the experience of women. Recent feminist research into the work of the female Impressionist painters by Griselda Pollock, Tamar Garb and others has demonstrated how domestic scenes by Cassatt and Morisot deliberately detail the gendered order of society.[72]

Female sculptors had to be adept at modelling the human figure in order to pursue their profession. They obtained the requisite training by attending anatomy classes at medical schools, apprenticing in the ateliers of sculptors who offered male and female students identical instruction, and through copying plaster casts of antique sculpture.[73] Consequently, their works deviate less from those produced by male sculptors in style or type of subject. Portraiture, allegorical and historical figures, and funeral monuments were produced by men and women alike. However, female sculptors were able to make statements about the status of women, or highlight the contributions made by legendary or historic women, through the specific events or people they chose to sculpt.

For example, Susan Durant portrayed women who heroically endured misfortune and false accusations, finally triumphing over their undeserved circumstances. The statues of Constance and the Faithful Shepherdess (illustrations 8 and 6) represent women who are unfairly maligned yet manage to prove their accusers to be mistaken. Hosmer's Zenobia, the Queen of Palmyra (illustration 7) has similar overtones of the courage which defies degradation. Louisa May Alcott captures the import of works like these in a conversation at a fictional artist's studio in "The Sunny Side" a chapter of her novel An Old Fashioned Girl. There, the women discuss a monumental sculpture-in-progress:

> Becky said she'd show us her idea of the coming woman. There she is . . . bigger, lovelier, and more imposing than any we see nowadays; and at the same time she is a true woman. See what a fine forehead, yet the mouth is both firm and tender, as if it could say strong, wise things, as well as teach children and kiss babies. We couldn't decide what to put in the hands as the most appropriate symbol. . . "Give her a sceptre; she would make a fine queen," answered Fanny. "No, we have had enough of that; women have been called queens a long time, but the kingdom given them isn't worth ruling . . .[74]

A deliberately feminist message is attributed to the fictional sculptor. Some of the works of Hosmer and Durant can be interpreted in the same way.

Because of the restrictions placed upon female artists by the art establishment, women adopted different types of subject-matter or infused traditional genres with new meaning. Thus, they were able to convey a message about women's capabilities both by the practice of their profession and through the works they produced.

At the outset of my discussion of the women's art movement, I suggested that the experiences of the female artists were similar to those of women who promoted suffrage, education and access to other professions. This is particularly true with regard to the women doctors. Elizabeth Blackwell and Elizabeth Garrett had to acquire their medical education through a series of indirect routes. Both of them received a significant portion of their training in France, where institutions were slightly more open to women than those in Britain. Once qualified, they were forced to establish their own infirmaries within which to practice. The institutions which suffered them to obtain the qualifications for their profession abruptly closed their doors against any further female applicants, much like the Royal Academy did to female students. Together they gave encouragement and practical support to other women who wished to follow them into medicine. Eventually they each established facilities to train women doctors. Given what they had in common, it comes as no surprise that the women doctors and the female artists shared the same concerns for women's rights and sought out each others' company. The friendships between female artists and woman doctors will be discussed later in this chapter.

Artists contributed to the rich diversity of disciplines and causes which characterized the feminist networks. They found friends among the literary feminists and women in the performing arts. The novelist George Eliot was a lifelong friend of Barbara Bodichon. Writers Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Harriet Beecher Stowe both enjoyed Harriet Hosmer's lively company in Italy.[75] The pleasant afternoons spent sitting for a portrait by Durant are recorded in Harriet Beecher Stowe's life story.[76] Louisa May Alcott was so inspired by her sister May's experiences as an artist in Paris that she immortalized them in a short story about Diana and Persis. Female artists figure prominently in another of Alcott's works, An Old Fashioned Girl, suggesting that the author cultivated friendships with artists.[77] The celebrated American actress Charlotte Cushman sheltered a colony of feminist sculptors in her Roman villa.[78] Helena Faucit, a performer on the English stage, entertained Susan Durant at a dinner parties attended by members of the musical and literary worlds.[79]

Feminists in other fields of work had close relationships with sculptors and painters. For nearly thirty years Frances Power Cobbe shared a house with Mary Lloyd through whom she met the American sculptors Emma Stebbins and Harriet Hosmer, and the redoubtable painter Rosa Bonheur during a journey to Rome.

Cobbe's and Lloyd's visits with Durant have already been noted. Barbara Bodichon and Susan Durant both had strong ties with Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. It was Blackwell who discreetly cared for Susan Durant's son, born out of wedlock, until he was three years old. Other artists knew Dr. Blackwell from the Thursday evening gatherings at Anna Jameson's home. Elizabeth Garrett opened her home to feminists from various fields; among the visitors on one Saturday were "Miss Cobbe . . . and some artists." She too was known and admired by Durant whose last exhibited work was a portrait of Dr. Elizabeth Garrett. Radicals Kate Amberley and Harriet Grote both numbered women artists among their feminist contacts.[80]

Through these social networks feminism was spread and activists were nurtured and equipped to carry on their work. The participation of many of the known members of the women's art movement in these feminist circles suggests that they perceived themselves and their movement to be an integral part of the women's rights program.

As has been noted, the women's art movement was conceived during a time of political and cultural upheaval. Beginning in the 1830s, the government and concerned capitalists aggressively promoted the visual arts as a means of creating social harmony and maintaining British manufacturing supremacy. Their efforts resulted in a greatly enlarged indigenous art industry supported by a newly-cultivated market. At roughly the same time, the passage of the first Reform Bill

(1832) enfranchised a larger section of society and raised the expectations of middle-class women that they would be the next group to be granted political power. The Philosophical Radicals did much to encourage this hope, showing by their own political advances that the established power structure could be successfully challenged. As the century wore on, women became increasingly aware of the political and social disabilities to which they were subjected and began to seek change.

Their efforts were spurred on by a profound shift in the marriage practices of middle-class men which brought a sharp increase in the number of spinsters seeking employment during the 1850s. Financial necessity was a major driving force behind women's campaigns for access to the professions. As well, an increasing number of women sought professional employment out of the conviction that their abilities were grievously under-utilized in the domestic sphere. Encouraged by the brisk art market and emboldened by the changing political climate, women entered the art profession in unprecedented numbers. A women's art movement was born. Its emergence directly coincided with other programs to expand women's employment opportunities and secure greater legal autonomy for them.

In summary, from the extant documents about the more prominent female artists, and the women who befriended them, it is possible to construct a picture of the women's art movement and its members. When this picture is compared with what we know about the Victorian feminist community, distinct similarities can be seen between the personal profiles of the women in both groups. A substantial proportion of female artists were daughters of radicals and non-conformists. Those who came from more conventional backgrounds were women whose strong personalities and needs to express their talent made them ill-suited for traditional domestic roles.

Some would not have held clearly articulated opinions on the rights of women at the outset. But the obstacles they confronted on their way to becoming painters and sculptors made them resolve to successfully challenge the power structure which refused to admit women. Thus, aspiring female artists became politicized by the struggle to get training for and recognition of their work. They formed friendships with other women who had faced similar impediments and who sought to improve the position of women in society. The goals they pursued and the means by which they achieved them are indistinguishable from those of the other issue groups which together formed the Victorian feminist movement. In the next chapter I will examine the feminist connections of one such artist, Susan Durant.

Notes

1. In 1841 there were 278 female artists recorded, by 1871 the numbers had swelled to 1069. Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Victorian Women Artists (London: The Women's Press, 1987), 2.

2. The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language (Canadian edition, 1988) defines the word "movement" as: "a series of acts and events planned towards a definite end by a body of people." I adopt Nunn's phrase "women's art movement" to describe the actions of female artists in nineteenth-century Britain. Their determined and, frequently, concerted efforts to make a place for themselves in the established art world can be regarded as a social movement. Nunn, Victorian Women Artists, 10.

3. For example, see Whitney Chadwick, Women, Art, and Society (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990); Germaine Greer, The Obstacle Race (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979); Charlotte Yeldham, Women Artists in Nineteenth-century France and England, 2 vols. (New York: Garland, 1984).

4. Nunn, Victorian Women Artists, 87.

5. John Crabbe, "An Artist Divided: the Forgotten Talent of Barbara Bodichon," Apollo, 113 (May 1981): 311-13. Jacquie Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon: Integrity in Diversity" in Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Key Women Thinkers, ed. Dale Spender (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

6. For information on the industrialization of art see Christopher Harvie, Graham Martin and Aaron Scharf, eds., Industrialisation and Culture 1830-1914 (London: The Open University, 1970); Lyndel Saunders King, The Industrialization of Taste: Victorian England and the Art Union of London (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985); Janet Minihan, The Nationalization of Culture: The Development of State Subsidies to the Arts in Great Britain (London: Hamilton, 1977).

7. Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures 1835-36; together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendices and Index, House of Commons, 16 August 1836, Introduction to the Report, unpaginated.

8. For information on the Schools of Design see Quentin Bell, *The Schools of Design* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963); Stuart Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* (London: University of London Press, 1970).

9. Recognizing that trained personnel would help to increase the profits of industry, the government required those who stood to benefit most to pay into the scheme. Unfortunately, this cost-sharing arrangement was not consistently successful. Bell, *The Schools of Design*, 102-104.

10. Peter Bailey names a number of manufacturers who built and furnished mill annexes with museums and other educational and recreational facilities. Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London; New York: Methuen, 1987), 55.

11. Inexperience with the medium and unsuitable climatic conditions brought a disastrous end to all dreams of a British fresco industry. Quentin Bell, *Victorian Artists* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 26.

12. The Corporation of the City of London conducted a series of competitions for seventeen statues to grace the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House. On a much smaller scale is a memorial portrait of Henry Fawcett, MP, which was erected on the Thames Embankment, by a group of women in appreciation of his efforts to extend their rights. Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 206, 355.

13. Dianne Sachko Macleod, "Art Collecting and Victorian Middle-Class Taste," *Art History* 10, no.3 (September 1987): 329.

14. Art unions sprang up in major towns and cities during the 1830s and 1840s. The most successful and most widely influential was the Art Union of London which operated from 1836 to 1911 selling subscriptions throughout the British Empire. For further information see Elizabeth Aslin, "The Rise and Progress of the Art Union of London," *Apollo* 85 (1967): 12-16; Charles Avery and Madeline Marsh, "The Bronze Statuettes of the Art Union of London: The Rise and Decline of Victorian Taste in Sculpture," *Apollo* 121 (1985): 328-337; Anthony King, "George Godwin and the Art Union of London, 1837-1911," *Victorian Studies* 8, no.2 (1965): 101-130; Lyndel Saunders King, *The Industrialization of Taste*.

15. *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures 1835-36; together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendices and Index*, House of Commons, 16 August 1836, q. 97.

16. *Art Union of London Annual Report* (1852), 10 quoted in King, *The Industrialization of Taste*, 215.

17. Aslin, "The Rise and Progress of the Art Union," 12. An annual subscription to the lottery cost one guinea, with some subscribers purchasing more than one subscription. Nevertheless, the numbers of people involved in the 1847 lottery is impressive. Throughout the 1850s and 1860s paid subscriptions amounted to between £12,000 to £14,000 yearly. King, "George Godwin and the Art Union," 121.

18. King, *The Industrialization of Taste*, 152.

19. *Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions; together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index*, House of Commons, 5 August 1845, p. v.

20. King, *The Industrialization of Taste*, 62, 147-48.

21. Sidney C. Hutchison, *the History of the Royal Academy 1768-1968* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1968), 66-67.

22. In a critique of the art exhibition season of 1844, William Makepeace Thackeray castigates both the exhibitors' pandering to "honest John Bull's taste" and the Academicians' pretensions to elevate public art appreciation. William Makepeace Thackeray, "May Gambols; or, Titmarsh in the Picture-Galleries," *Fraser's Magazine* 29, no. 174 (June 1844): 702.

23. See Bell, *The Schools of Design*, 67-68; and Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, especially the material on Dyce.

24. Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), 170; and Yeldham, *Women Artists in France and Britain*, 1:29.

25. Yeldham, *Women Artists in France and England*, 1:71.

26. See Macdonald, *Art Education*; Adrian Rifkin, "Success Disavowed: The Schools of Design in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Britain. (An Allegory)," *Journal of Design History* 1, no. 2 (1988): 89-102; John Seed, "Commerce and the Liberal Arts: the Political Economy of Art in Manchester, 1775-1860," in *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class*, ed. Janet Wolff and John Seed (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); and Shannon Hunter Hurtado, "The Promotion of the Visual Arts in Britain, 1835-1860," *Canadian Journal of History* 28, no. 1 (April 1993): 60-80.

27. Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 3rd. ser., vol. 14 (23 July 1832), col. 645 quoted in Minihan, The Nationalisation of Culture, 56.

28. For a discussion of accomplishment training in art see Yeldham, Women Artists, 1:9-11.

29. Levine, Victorian Feminists, 130.

30. W.C.Taylor, "On the Cultivation of Taste in the Operative Classes," Art Journal (1849): 5.

31. Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon," 101.

32. William Rathbone Greg, "Why Are Women Redundant?" National Review (April 1862) excerpted in Murray, ed., Strong-Minded Women, 50-54.

33. G. M.Trevelyan, A Shortened History of England (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), 485.

34. Jane Rendall, The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860 (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), 285.

35. Hosmer's formal art instruction began in 1852 when she entered the studio of John Gibson as a student. Joseph Leach, "Harriet Hosmer: Feminist in Bronze and Marble," The Feminist Art Journal 5 (summer 1976): 10, 11, 12.

36. Yeldham, Women Artists; Nunn, Victorian Women Artists; Greer, Obstacle Race.

37. Nunn, Victorian Women Artists, 10.

38. Yeldham, Women Artists, 1:21, 295; and Marsh and Nunn, Women Artists and the Pre-Raphaelites, 27.

39. In an undated note Nannie Leigh Smith tells Emily Davies "I heard of you at the Portfolio the other night--everyone seemed glad you were enjoying Palermo. . ." Nannie Leigh Smith to Emily Davies [January 1863], Bodichon Papers, B 305, Girton College Archive, Cambridge. Scant information is available about the Portfolio Club and its membership. An unpublished manuscript by Jan Marsh is available at the Girton College Archive. Some of the information in the manuscript is presented in Jan Marsh and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Women Artists and the Pre-

Raphaelite Movement (London: Virago, 1989), 41. However, the authors' suggestion that the Portfolio Club involved men from the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood is contradicted by evidence in Hester Burton, Barbara Bodichon 1827-1891 (London: John Murray, 1949), 44 passim. I am indebted to Martha Vicinus for reminding me of Burton's work on the topic.

40. The American female sculptors who studied in Rome were dubbed the "White Marmorean Flock" by Henry James. Chadwick, Women, Art, and Society, 198.

41. Cushman's involvement with the female sculptors practising in Rome is well-documented in Joseph Leach, Bright Particular Star: The Life and Times of Charlotte Cushman (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1970). Parkes's first visit to Rome, where she spent a memorable vacation with Hosmer, was in 1857. Bessie Rayner Parkes to Harriet Hosmer, 30 December 1857, BRP IX, minor correspondents, letter 32, Parkes Papers, Girton College Archive, Cambridge.

42. Marsh and Nunn, Women Artists and the Pre-Raphaelites, 44.

43. Showalter, ed., Alternative Alcott, xxxix.

44. Louisa May Alcott [Diana and Persis] Unfinished, untitled work, 1879 in Alternative Alcott, ed. Elaine Showalter (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 400.

45. Alcott, "The Sunny Side," in Alternative Alcott, ed. Showalter, 234.

46. Alcott, "The Sunny Side," in Alternative Alcott, ed. Showalter, 228-235.

47. "The Society of Female Artists," English Woman's Journal 1, no. 3 (May 1858): 206.

48. Nunn, Victorian Women Artists, 73.

49. Josephine Kamm, Rapiers and Battleaxes: The Women's Movement and Its Aftermath (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), 104.

50. Erskine Perry and Lord Brougham acted as agents for the women, placing the petition before the House of Commons and the House of Lords, respectively. Report from the Select Committee on the Married Women's Property Bill, 1868-69 (210) vii. For the names of some of the signatories see Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon," 97.

51. Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon," 97.

52. Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 69. Information about the membership and activities of the Langham Place Circle can be found in Candida Ann Lacey, ed., *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and the Langham Place Group* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).

53. Harriet Grote to Frances von Koch, 22 February 1863 in Thomas Herbert Lewin, ed., *The Lewin Letters* (London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1909), 1:250. Although this letter to Harriet's sister was written long after the 1856 petition, a poem by Harriet, dated November 1855, indicates that she wanted reform of the marriage laws much earlier. Harriet Grote, *Collected Papers in Prose and Verse, 1842-62* (London: John Murray, 1862), 284.

54. Caine, *Victorian Feminists*, 69; Levine, *Feminist Lives*, 28; Frances von Koch to Harriet Grote, 6 November 1869, Lewin, ed., *The Lewin Letters*, 1:278.

55. Harriet Grote to Frances von Koch, 24 August 1864 in Lewin, ed., *The Lewin Letters*, 1:253.

56. The list of contributors includes Harriet Grote, Isa Blagden, Mary Howitt, Leigh Hunt, Coventry Patmore, Mrs. Norton, Theodore Martin, Monckton Milnes, Adelaide Procter, and William Makepeace Thackeray, among others. *English Woman's Journal* (1 December 1861) inside back cover.

57. "The Society of Female Artists," *The English Woman's Journal* 1, no.3 (May 1858): 205.

58. Ibid., 206.

59. Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon," 106.

60. "The Society of Female Artists," *English Woman's Journal* (1 May 1858): 206.

61. A critical review of the purpose and terms of the Schools of Design exposes the class-bound ignorance of the committee convened to oversee their operation. T. Simmons Mackintosh, "The New Schools of Design," *Mechanics' Magazine* 27 (3 June 1837): 131.

62. See Macdonald, *Art Education*, chap. 7 passim, for the social composition of School of Design classes.

63. "The Royal Academy," The Athenaeum 1644 (30 April 1859): 581.

64. Nunn, Victorian Women Artists, 87; and English Woman's Journal (1858): 205-208 passim.

65. This was probably not the first time a woman signed her work without indicating her first name, it certainly was not the last. Emily Davies omitted her title and first name on a letter she circulated to protest the exclusion of Elizabeth Garrett from medical examinations at the University of London in 1862. Levine, Feminist Lives, 141.

66. Westminster Review 70 o.s., 14 n.s. (July 1858): 163

67. Nunn, Victorian Women Artists, 45.

68. Joseph Leach, "Harriet Hosmer," 10, 11.

69. Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon," 106; Crabbe, "An Artist Divided," 313.

70. I have not yet found evidence to corroborate Dunford's claim about this. Penny Dunford, ed., A Biographical Dictionary of Women Artists in Europe and America Since 1850 (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), s.v. Durant, Susan.

71. For information on the subject-matter chosen by female artists see Chadwick, Women, Art, and Society, chap. 6 passim; and Yeldham, Women Artists, chap. 3 passim.

72. Whitney Chadwick presents a helpful summary of their findings. Chadwick, Women, Art, and Society, 217-224. This is a departure from the "maternité" tradition of a slightly earlier period. During the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century paintings of happy mothers and children served as a means of indoctrinating French women into the domestic role prescribed by the state. For example see Carol Duncan, "Happy Mothers and Other New Ideas in French Art," Art Bulletin 55 (1973): 570-83.

73. Harriet Hosmer attended medical school and trained with John Gibson. Susan Durant was a student in Baron Henri de Triqueti's studio in Paris and Mary Thornycroft learned her sculpting techniques from her sculptor father, John Francis. Casts from antique sculpture were the primary means of learning figure-drawing in the Female School of Art in the 1850s. Leach, Harriet Hosmer, 10; Read, Victorian Sculpture, 78; and Yeldham, Women Artists in France and Britain, 1:16.

74. Alcott, "The Sunny Side" in Showalter, ed., Alternative Alcott, 230.

75. Leach, "Harriet Hosmer," 12; and Leach, Bright Particular Star, 290.

76. Fields, ed., Life and Letters Stowe, 207.

77. Showalter, Alternative Alcott, xxxvi-xxxix passim.

78. Chadwick, Women Art and Society, 200-01.

79. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 18 February 1866 and [n.d.] 1868, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 58, 180.

80. References for these relationships are as follows: Eliot and Bodichon: Matthews, "Barbara Bodichon," 106; E.B.Browning and Hosmer: Leach, "Harriet Hosmer," 12; Durant and Stowe: Annie Fields, ed., Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1897), 207; Faucit and Durant: Derek Hudson, Munby, Man of Two Worlds, 218; Cobbe, Bonheur, Lloyd and Stebbins: Caine, Victorian Feminists, 120-121; Blackwell and Durant: Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 173 and The last will and testament of Susan Durant, 15 May 1872 (proved 30 January 1873) Public Record Office, Family Records Division, Somerset House, London; Garrett and artists: Anderson, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, 143-144; Amberley, Grote and Durant: Russell and Russell, eds., The Amberley Papers, 1:314.

CHAPTER THREE

BY HER FRIENDS WE CAN KNOW HER

Using the method I have termed "surrogate lives" I intend to demonstrate in this chapter that Susan Durant's stance towards women's rights can be discovered through an examination of her friends and associations. I will examine closely twenty-nine of the approximately 140 people who are mentioned in her papers or who name her in their correspondence or diaries. The basis for my selection of these people is the existence of enough data about their lives to locate them within the social and political milieu of Victorian Britain. The nature of Durant's relationships with these people both as individuals and members of identifiable social circles will be carefully considered. Before entering into this investigation, I will summarize what is known about her life.

The major British, French, and German biographical dictionaries of nineteenth-century artists reveal that she was a very successful artist, "one of Queen Victoria's favourite sculptors."[1] They describe the important commissions she received and the prestigious exhibition venues at which her works were displayed. Durant's sculpture was shown at the Great Exhibition (1851), the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition (1857), and at nineteen Royal Academy Exhibitions, among others. Commissioned works by Durant are on permanent display at the Mansion House in London and the Albert Memorial Chapel in Windsor Castle. A bust of

Queen Victoria, which was made for the benchers of the Inner Temple in London, was destroyed during the 1939-45 war.

It is recorded that she was trained at the Paris studio of Baron Henri de Triqueti with whom she later collaborated on the decoration of the Albert Memorial Chapel.[2] For a time she was also employed as the sculpting instructor of Princess Louise, a post which gained her social prestige and which is considered noteworthy by the biographers.

A few of the sources allude to her social status, noting that she came from a good Devonshire family and that her adoption of sculpting as a career was not based on pecuniary necessity, but, rather, on a love of art. None is able to fix the date of her birth any more precisely than sometime between 1820-1830, perhaps because she reserved this information to herself; and all lament her untimely death at Paris on 1 January 1873. The obituary notices for Durant recite a similar combination of accolades and statistics about her.

Sadly, these brief abstracts of Durant's career have become the sum of her life's history. It is incongruous that a person who evidenced such talent and ambition should receive such minimal treatment in the historical record. However, as a single female artist she had no legitimate family members who lived on to keep her memory alive. Moreover, she had what would have been considered a very unconventional life for a woman, perhaps a life tinged with questionable morality.

Thus, her contribution to the art world has been eclipsed by nineteenth-century considerations of propriety and gender.

Given the restrictive attitudes towards women's professions in Victorian Britain what were the convictions which enabled her to realise her ambition to make "for herself a place in the world amongst the great thinkers and workers of the day?"[3] It is my thesis that Susan Durant was a feminist who benefited greatly from the support of others who shared her views. In this chapter I will focus on the relationships she maintained, deriving evidence for my case from the types of individuals and groups with whom she associated. How she expressed her feminist convictions in her work will be dealt with in Chapter Four where an analysis of selected pieces will be made.

Aside from the notices in the biographical dictionaries and the obituary columns, there is scant published information about Susan Durant. Reviews of her work can be found in journals and newspapers such as: the English Woman's Journal, the Times, the Illustrated London News, and the Art Journal. In addition, her name occasionally appears in the published diaries and the correspondence of a handful of her better known contemporaries. Although some of these people also were single professional women they have been more readily remembered because they left a written record of their lives. Being a sculptor, Susan Durant recorded her ideas in the clay, plaster and stone of her sculpture. Even these monuments to her life have disappeared, destroyed by war, lost in time.[4]

By far the most written material about Durant is found in the Queen's Archive at Windsor Castle. Among the Durant papers at Windsor are: a collection of her correspondence, the bulk of which dates from 1864 to 1869; a fragment of her diary; and two brief memoirs, one by her friend and travelling companion Emma Beaufoy Wallis and the other by the donor of the papers, Mrs. Lucy R. Shilston. Emma Wallis treasured the letters written by her dear friend Susan Durant, who worked for members of the royal families in England and Germany and was on friendly terms with "the dukes and duchesses of the Faubourg St. Germaine" in Paris.[5] Durant's self portrait in marble decorated the Wallis home and was passed on, along with the letters and diaries, to Emma Wallis's niece, Lucy. In turn, Lucy relayed both the Durant memorabilia and her own recollections of the sculptor to her daughter Lucy Shilston.[6]

Perhaps because Durant's letters were written to family and friends, much of their substance consists of reports about the weather, the state of her work, and brief mentions of visits with numerous friends and business associates. Surprisingly few are of a confiding nature and two alone make statements which directly link Durant to a feminist cause, that of suffrage. However, it will become evident that an examination of the lives of the people named in her letters and other relevant sources can yield valuable information about Durant's views on women's rights.

The first thing that is notable about the names of sitters and patrons mentioned in Durant's papers is their interconnectedness. The web of relationships is remarkable with many of the same names appearing regularly in the diaries and memoirs of other prominent Victorians. A number of social, political and occupational clusters can be identified within this sample of twenty-nine people and organizations. I have organized my analysis of the members of the sample into five clusters which will be examined in descending order of size. These clusters are not discreet entities; it will become apparent that some of the people from one cluster can be just as easily accommodated within one or more of the others. My selection is based on a judgement about which category most aptly reflects the identity of each individual. The clusters are: philosophical radicals, avowed feminists, artists, the royal family, and professional societies.

PHILOSOPHICAL RADICALS

One focal group within Susan Durant's circle of acquaintance is immediately discernable. Durant's name appears in the personal papers of Lady Amberley, Harriet Grote, and John Stuart Mill. Kate Amberley refers to Durant as a "mutual friend" whom she and Harriet visited while in Paris in 1864.[7] In turn, Durant's papers include mentions of Kate. On one occasion, Durant returned from a day of portrait sittings at Windsor Castle in the company of Lord Russell. Her diary entry of 16 November 1865 confides her hesitance to strike up a conversation with the Prime Minister: "little by little I took courage and asked him after Amberley and my lady. He was very communicative, talked about the Grotes."[8] Four months later, Durant recounts an extremely busy day at the studio:

> Of course visitors chose that day to call--but I admitted no one--Lady Amberley . . . came to my door. I went to speak to her but I could not ask her to come in.[9]

For Harriet Grote, Durant proved to be both a friend and a rival for the affections of Harriet's husband, George. Her visits to the Grote's country homes (1861 and 1862) and a vacation in Paris (1864), during which she and the couple occupied different rooms in the same hotel, are chronicled in Harriet's letters and "Note Book 1861-4."[10] In 1862 Durant prepared a marble portrait medallion of George Grote, which hangs in an entrance-way at University College London in commemoration of his service as the Vice-Chancellor (1862-1871), (illustration 1). When Kate Amberley and Harriet Grote stopped by Triqueti's studio in Paris, they found Durant working on a head of Homer which had been commissioned by Harriet Grote for the wall above the door of their country house near Shere in Surrey (illustration 2). Durant later expressed satisfaction at seeing "Homer presiding over the entrance doorway" of "Ridgeway" in a letter to her father on 1 January 1865.[11] Other letters by the sculptor make mention of the meals, drives, whist parties, and visits in both Paris and England that she enjoyed with the Grotes.[12] Like many members of the art community in nineteenth-century Britain and Europe, Durant led a peripatetic existence, travelling to execute commissions and attend exhibitions of her work. She spent several sojourns in Paris, working on her own pieces in the studio of Triqueti.

When the relationship between the seventy-year-old George Grote and Durant, who was about half his age, intensified into a love affair during September 1864, Harriet Grote confronted her husband but permitted the "infatuation" to carry on for three years. Although this caused her anxiety, she was not so much shocked by the dalliance as hurt at being ignored. George Grote had been suspected of philandering before with Fanny Elssler and Harriet Grote had reacted to her gossiping friends with disdain. In a letter to her sister in 1840 she declared:

> I hate the worldlings for their vapid morality, all external and conventional as it is; morality to my thinking is a far wider and nobler sentiment based on purest motives of beneficence, and I defy the pismires! . . . If you heard ought of the hubbub . . . you will probably be assured that George is keeping up an illicit amour with Fanny and I am left in the basket.[13]

The infatuation with Durant showed no sign of dwindling, so, having exhausted her own powers of persuasion, Harriet Grote enlisted an unnamed mutual friend to intervene on her behalf and bring the affair to a close. The results of this action are conveyed in letters to both Mill and his step-daughter Helen Taylor, who were presumably acquainted with Durant, as well.[14] Although Harriet claimed not to harbour "any sort of vindictive feeling" towards either of the lovers, references to Durant do not appear in the Lewin correspondence after 1867. Similarly, Durant's unambiguously dated letters make no further mention of the Grotes after March 1866.[15] Apparently out of courtesy towards Harriet Grote, Durant quietly let her relationship with the couple die.

The immediate significance of these relationships lies in the knowledge that the Amberleys, the Grotes and the Mills were mutual friends who espoused philosophical radicalism and promoted the rights of women. Mill's writings on the status of women and his pro-suffrage activities have been discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis. In the following paragraphs I will examine the contributions to the feminist program made by Lady Amberley and the Grotes. Both Kate Amberley and Harriet Grote were vocal proponents for extending suffrage, higher education, and professional occupations to women.[16]

Kate Amberley's commitment to women's rights was practical and unswerving in the face of opposition. She went about on foot collecting signatures in favour of the Married Women's Property bill (second reading 14 April 1869) and over the course of a week she canvassed the cottages at Littleworth, obtaining "235 signatures--chiefly women."[17] Convinced that women should be accepted into the medical profession, Kate Amberley engaged her friend, Dr. Elizabeth Garrett, to be the family doctor in 1867. Her diaries record Dr. Garrett's attendance at the birth of her twins and at times when she or the children were ill. As a rule the doctor restricted her practice to women and children, but on at least one occasion she prescribed medication for Lord Amberley under his wife's name.[18] Kate's support of female doctors extended beyond the care of her own family. In 1869, when Edinburgh University agreed to admit women to medical training, Kate contributed "£50 for 3 years" to a scholarship fund organized by Dr. Garrett.[19]

It was in connection with the issue of female suffrage that Kate Amberley publicly expressed her convictions about women's rights. Spurred on by Mill's *Subjection of Women* (1869) and the enthusiasm generated at a meeting of the Women's Suffrage Society in March 1869, she prepared a manuscript on the status of women which she presented at a Society-sponsored meeting in Stroud, on 25 May 1870. Defying convention, she stood and read the lecture to a large audience of "very respectably dressed people" many of whom said, afterwards, that they were "converted" by Kate Amberley's arguments. Her efforts received a sharply condescending editorial comment in the *Times* and an irate reaction from Queen Victoria who declared to Theodore Martin that "Lady Amberley ought to get a *good whipping*" for promoting "this mad, wicked folly of "Women's Rights."[20] By contrast, Helen Taylor praised the speech at Stroud declaring: "You have made a raid into the enemies [*sic*] country; got the ideas introduced among just the sort of people most difficult to get at." Upon receiving a copy of the text of the lecture, Harriet Beecher Stowe sent a warm letter of thanks and support.

> I am delighted to hear you so gallantly resolving to push the question & make a hustings affair of it. Go on my dear, you are sure to conquer & you fight charmingly & your victory must precede ours. You preceded us in negro emancipation & you will in this--you handle your weapons beautifully.[21]

Some months later Kate Amberley was obliged to leave a party at the Gladstones' home because of the ridicule directed towards her. However, encouraged by her feminist friends she continued to conduct Women's Suffrage Society meetings and circulate petitions.[22] In her home she held a steady flow of feminist gatherings, thereby becoming acquainted with a substantial array of women's rights advocates.

Harriet Grote had been involved in women's rights activities from the 1850s, if not earlier. Her poems and essays dating from that decade express her strong disagreement with the laws of marriage which placed unreasonable restrictions on the lives of women. In November 1855, she wrote "Lines Suggested by More than One Recent Domestic History," urging wives to "besiege the conscience of their lords . . . till these revised the laws."[23] The title of the poem refers to Caroline Norton's struggle to obtain legal and financial rights for women who were separated from their husbands. Although the Solicitor General had announced, in March 1855, that a bill to reform the marriage and divorce laws would be forthcoming, it had not materialized by November when Harriet voiced her frustration in the words of her poem.[24] Following the enactment of the Reform of the Marriage and Divorce Laws bill in 1857, Harriet Grote aimed her protests at the laws which alienated women from their property and earnings once they married. In a well-reasoned essay, entitled The Law of Marriage, she argued that without access to property, women could seldom afford the costs (approximately £100) of obtaining a divorce.[25] She went on to assert that women should not be made to depend upon the financial resources of their husbands, no matter how amicable the marriage. Instead, they should be given the opportunity to obtain higher education and professional employment so that they could take care of their own financial needs.

Having identified the interrelationship between the legal, educational and occupational disadvantages faced by women in Victorian society, Harriet Grote set about working for change. Her efforts to open the professions of sculpting and painting to women have been documented in Chapter Two of this thesis. The experiences of Harriet's friend, Dr. Elizabeth Garrett, brought home the knowledge that professional employment could not be obtained without a proper education and academic certification. Harriet was one of the many feminists who had supported the determined young Garrett in her struggle to be admitted to the medical profession. Although Elizabeth Garrett had managed to obtain the necessary hospital training to become a doctor, she had to find an institution which would allow her to write the examinations for a medical degree. It was probably through

Harriet Grote's agency that this situation came to the attention of George Grote, who had become the Vice-Chancellor of University College London. In 1862, on Elizabeth Garrett's behalf, George Grote made a motion that:

> the Senate will endeavour . . . to obtain a modification of the charter, rendering female students admissible to the degrees and honours of the University of London, on the same conditions of examination as male students . . .[26]

The motion was defeated and Elizabeth Garrett had to be content to conduct her medical practice as a licensed Apothecary until 1869 when she was admitted to the degree examinations in Paris.[27]

Harriet Grote played a conspicuous role in the campaign for women's suffrage, as well. For women, electoral enfranchisement meant more direct access to the legislative power structure. Once endowed with the right to vote, women could put pressure on the Members of Parliament to reform laws which placed members of their sex at a disadvantage. Even before Helen Taylor and Barbara Bodichon took the initiative to circulate a petition and form the Women's Suffrage Society in 1866, Harriet Grote was voicing her conviction that women should have the vote.[28] In a letter of 1863 to her sister, Frances von Koch, Harriet Grote expressed her pleasure in:

> Sweden's rational progress both in government and material civilization. The reform bill lately brought forward is wonderfully bold . . . even women are to have votes for the Upper Chamber: a proof of large and generous equity on the part of the men in your fortunate country towards our oppressed sex.[29]

Frances, who was married to a Swedish national, shared the feminist views of her sister and her niece Jane Lewin.[30] Harriet Grote became a vocal member of the Women's Suffrage Society; holding "forth on the rights of women" at social gatherings and speaking out at a full meeting of the Society in Hanover Square in March 1869.[31]

George Grote's opinions on women's suffrage were influenced by his studies in Greek history and his associations with Mill. Lionel Tollemache's recollection of a conversation with Grote on the issue of suffrage is revealing:

> On principle, also, he desired the enfranchisement of women. I once asked him whether he did not think that, intellectually as well as physically, the average woman is inferior to the average man, so that the enfranchisement of women would lower the level of intelligence among the electors. He replied that he thought, with Plato, that in intellect, as in other respects, a first-class man is superior to a first-class woman, and a second-class man to a second-class woman; but that a first-class woman might be better than a second-class man; and it seemed to him unjust that the sex should be disfranchised.[32]

The question of the status of women raised by Tollemache was one of the chief excuses for refusing the franchise to women and members of the subordinate classes during the Victorian period. Grote's answer adroitly undercuts the validity of the question and asserts the primacy of justice over all other concerns including gender and class. His willingness to seek amendments to the charter of the University of London on behalf of women exemplifies his commitment to impartial treatment for both genders.

Durant's connections with the radicals extend further. Two of her known patrons, Sir Austen Henry Layard and Lord Goldsmid, were radical MPs. A third patron, Sir Moses Montefiore, was also known for his radical views. Layard (MP Southwark) took a considerable interest in promoting Durant's sculpture during the 1860s. In a letter of 15 April 1861 written to Harriet Hosmer, Layard states:

> I have lately been interesting myself (as the term is) for Miss Durant (a sculptress whom you may know by name, if not personally). She has been competing for a marble statue to be raised in the Mansion House. In representing to our Lord Mayor and Aldermen the importance of giving fair encouragement to a woman of ability and energy, I cited your case. I am glad to say that Miss D. has succeeded . . . [33]

It was indeed a great compliment to Durant's abilities that she was chosen to prepare one of the seventeen statues to decorate the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House. The selection process involved visits, by a delegation from the Mansion House, to the sculpture courts of the Crystal Palace and the studios of recommended sculptors in order to assess their skills; prospective candidates for the commission were asked to submit statuettes; and on the basis of those submissions fourteen sculptors were designated to execute the figures in marble.[34] Layard's decision to promote Durant's work to the Mansion House officials is indicative of both his esteem for her skills and his awareness of the difficulties which beset female artists. His desire to see women afforded the opportunity to become professional artists is evident from the praise and encouragement he lavishes on Harriet Hosmer, the American sculptor, in his letter to her:

> justly proud you may well be of the reputation you have made, for it is no ordinary thing for a young lady, in spite of prejudice and fashion, to fight her way through all the difficulties of a sculptor's profession, until she reaches the highest rank of it. I cannot tell you how much I have rejoiced at your success, not only on account of the regard and esteem I feel for you personally, but because of the example you have set to other women.[35]

These words of approbation came from a man with a well-informed taste for art. Before entering political life, he had made a name for himself as the archaeologist who excavated "Nineveh" in 1846-47.[36] As a result of this "dig" and his travels through Rome he would have gained a knowledge of and appreciation for sculpted artifacts from antiquity. It is apparent from Durant's comments in a letter to her father, dated 13 May 1869, that she valued Layard's judgment in matters of art. Speaking of one of her contributions to the Royal Academy exhibition that month she said:

> I fancy Ruth must look well because Mr. Layard told me he had particularly noticed and admired it.[37]

His name appears elsewhere in her letters. On New Year's eve 1864, Layard is noted as a fellow guest at a "party at the Friths," where he "made himself very agreeable." Conscious that it was socially difficult for a woman to travel on her own, he made a promise to "escort [Durant] to Orton" where she intended to pay a visit to the dowager Lady Huntly, a kinswoman of his. Later, in a letter to Emma

Wallis, dated 13 December 1868, Durant voices her pleasure upon hearing of his appointment to the post of Commissioner of Works and Buildings.[38] Layard's enthusiastic promotion of Durant's and Hosmer's careers and his practical assistance in other matters suggests that he sympathized with the aspirations of women and tried to mitigate the social restrictions which hampered their progress. A comment from his biographer gives further evidence for this view:

> Layard was especially helpful and loyal to those who needed help, and he was on especially good terms with intelligent women such as Harriet Grote, Elizabeth Eastlake, Lucie Duff Gordon, Janet Ross, and Sarah Austin.[39]

Lord Goldsmid, the second of Durant's radical patrons, purchased the three bas-reliefs of Thetis that she exhibited at the Society of Female Artists in 1863.[40] In his capacity as the member for Reading, he supported legislation of a Married Women's Property Act.[41] His sister, Anna Goldsmid, and his wife, Louisa, were both active feminists.[42]

Sir Moses Montefiore is the third patron with radical leanings. A friend of the Goldsmid family, Montefiore is best known for his personal campaign to attain freedom of religion for the Jews in Palestine and for founding Jews' College in Ramsgate (1867). Montefiore and his wife, Judith, visited Durant's studio on 3 December 1857 to see "the bust you made for us of H.H. Toussoun Pasha the son of the Viceroy of Egypt." They declared the portrait to be a good likeness of the sitter and a "beautiful Work of Art." The closing words of the letter suggest that this piece, which Durant displayed at the Society of Female Artists' exhibition the following Spring, was destined to be a gift to the Viceroy:

> with our united and most earnest wishes that your well deserved fame may shine bright in the East and in the West.[43]

Henry Cole was another of Durant's friends who kept radical company.[44] As a young man he was introduced to Mill, Grote, and Charles Buller, another notable radical, with whom he met twice weekly for discussions at Grote's London home. Cole's grasp of issues and his organizational capabilities were so good that Richard Cobden, the Liberal MP who led the crusade against the Corn Laws, offered him the post of secretary of the Anti-Corn Law League in 1839. Beginning in his youth, Cole took training in water-colour painting and exhibited his works at the Royal Academy shows; later on, he designed a tea service which won the Society of Arts design award for 1845. He continued to dabble in different media, learning how to engrave and etch as well. During his fifty years in public work, Cole managed to combine his love for art and his interest in politics to great advantage. He assisted the Prince Consort with the planning and execution of the Great Exhibition of 1851. A year later, he was appointed secretary of the Department of Practical Art. Two major developments took place under his direction of the Department. Firstly, the Schools of Design were dismantled and replaced by a Central School for training art teachers, and a series of local schools which provided classes in elementary drawing to school children. Secondly, the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) was established to display a collection of "applied" and "fine" art.

Durant's letters tell of a close friendship between herself and the Coles. One August, probably in the summer of 1866, she took an extensive vacation to Austria and Germany with Mr. and Mrs. Cole. Together they hiked through alpine meadows and took a tour through the salt mines near Berchtesgaden. In matters of business, Henry Cole used his influential position as a public servant to benefit Durant and her friends. According to a letter of 17 August 1866, he arranged to exhibit "the whole series," approximately seventeen, of Durant's portrait medallions of the royal family (including grandchildren) "in one of the rooms in the new buildings at the [South Kensington] Museum."[45] This was an unparalleled opportunity for Durant to publicize her work. People would be readily drawn to the display out of respect for the royal family; some would come out of curiosity to see the likenesses of the royal grandchildren. Moreover, by gathering the portraits together in one room, the Museum implicitly conferred special recognition on Durant. Her name would have been featured at the entrance to the exhibit. From a practical standpoint, the new surroundings offered optimal conditions for viewing the portraits. Although a number of the medallions had been shown at the Royal

Academy exhibition in May 1866, the room set aside at that venue for sculpture was notoriously ill-lit and crowded.[46]

Durant knew Cole well enough to ask favours of him on behalf of her friends. Apparently Durant approached Cole with a request for employment for her friend Mr. Sydney Whiting. Whiting, whose name appears a number of times in Durant's letters, was subsequently employed to report on the Paris Exhibition (1867) for the South Kensington Museum. Durant acknowledges that: "We are indebted for this [position] to my friend Mr Cole."[47]

There is a possibility that in return, Durant had been of some service to the Cole family. Had she perhaps given modelling lessons to one of Henry Cole's daughters, who then submitted the finished product of the lessons to the Royal Academy? I suggest that there is good evidence for this case. A review of the Royal Academy exhibition of 1866 refers to a terra cotta medallion profile of the Marquis of Salisbury shown by Miss H. Cole.[48] Although the sculptor of the work is not identified as a relative of Henry Cole, it is certainly possible that she was one of his five daughters (one of the editors of Cole's published diaries is Henrietta Cole, probably his daughter).[49] It is perhaps more than an interesting coincidence that in the same year that Durant was engaged in sculpting the royal portrait medallions she went on a vacation with the Coles. Durant had given instruction in the modelling of high relief portraits to Princess Louise, who produced a medallion of Lady Churchill under the sculptor's supervision in January of 1866.[50]

Cole's assistance in bringing Durant's work to the attention of the public and the possibility that he cultivated artistic talent in one of his daughters, suggest that he supported the idea of artistic careers for women.

Finally, one of Durant's portrait sitters was Daniel Whittle Harvey, radical MP for Colchester (1818-20 and 1826-34) and Southwark (1835-40). Durant's bust of Harvey was shown at the Royal Academy in 1851 during his tenure as Commissioner of the London Police.[51]

An association with radicalism alone is not an endorsement of women's rights, but as Banks has shown, radical company was one of the more prolific seedbeds of feminist activism.[52] On the basis of the aforementioned relationships, it is tempting to assume that Durant wholeheartedly identified with the radicals and was cultivated by them. Comments in her correspondence indicate that she valued liberalism. On 7 July [1864] she wrote: "I read my Times daily and am very glad when the Debate is going in favour of the government." In September of 1865 she described her relationship with the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia, noting with approval their tacit opposition to the Prussian government. "We talk of everything except politics--but I can see how liberal they are and how they dislike the present government."[53] However, although the radicals comprise a prominent group in her acquaintance, they neither form a majority, nor is it clear that their radicalism is the single feature which attracted Durant to them. Alternatively, it is altogether possible that their involvement in women's issues was the primary focus of the friendships. Certainly, a further look at the network of relationships in Durant's life points to a diversity of political affiliations. Among the friends named in her correspondence are Thomas Headlam, the judge-advocate general (1859-66, Liberal MP: Newcastle 1847-74) whose name does not appear in dictionaries of radicals, and Frances Power Cobbe, a staunch conservative but a determined advocate of women's rights.

The varied yet interwoven nature of Durant's social network is further illustrated by the figure of Arthur J. Munby. Although not a wholly convinced adherent of the women's movements, Munby nevertheless frequented the conversation evenings given by leading suffrage supporters like Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Clementia Taylor.[54] These women, in turn, were involved with Mill and other sympathetic radicals. Munby's impression of Durant, whom he met at a dinner held by Theodore Martin and his wife, the actress Helena Faucit, in 1865 suggests a "strong-minded woman."[55] Her lively conversation and imposing presence fascinated Munby:

> Miss Durant is a very striking person: . . . tall & very comely . . . ;erect, high-couraged, and superbly drest [sic]. And her talk was worthy of all this:

> she dwelt with airy ease, but without parade of learning, upon art works, art subjects, upon Italy and Dresden & the like.[56]

However, her "selfasserting [sic] strength" he thought "somewhat masculine and out of place" in such a refined lady.[57] Ironically, Durant makes no mention of Munby in her description of that dinner party.[58]

AVOWED FEMINISTS

Avowed feminists form another distinct grouping within Durant's circle of acquaintance. Her relationships with Harriet Grote and Kate Amberley have already been discussed at length. I will devote considerable attention to the feminist involvements of Frances Power Cobbe in order to obtain as much material as possible to relate to Susan Durant's interests.

Frances Power Cobbe's name appears only twice in Durant's correspondence but there is a strong element of excitement associated with each mention of her. The first time, in March [1867], Cobbe is named as one of a list of distinguished guests invited by Durant to a dinner party in honour of her friend Mr. Greaves. Cobbe's name alone is underscored, perhaps indicating that she was a very special guest.[59] Two months later, Durant recounts Cobbe's call with news of the outcome of Mill's motion, on 20 May 1867, to amend the enfranchisement bill to include women. The letter is infused with enthusiasm:

> Miss Cobbe and Miss Lloyd called today when we were out--very [proud] I suppose--that seventy members voted with John Stuart Mill for female suffrage! It was a triumph. Ever yours a Female Voter![60]

It is very likely that Durant was among the 1,521 people who signed the petition in support of female suffrage that Mill presented to the House.[61] Although Cobbe resigned from the first Executive Committee of the London National Society for Women's Suffrage within a few weeks of its founding, apparently for reasons of personality and politics, she still maintained an active commitment to the movement.[62]

In 1881 Cobbe published The Duties of Women. A Course of Lectures in which she states that her interest in women's suffrage stemmed from the period of her philanthropic work with Mary Carpenter in Bristol during 1859-60.[63]

A closer look at Cobbe's interests reveals that other feminist issues also made significant claims upon her. She was a vocal advocate of married women's property rights which she promoted in her arrestingly entitled tract "Criminals, Idiots, Women and Minors. Is the classification sound? A Discussion of the Laws concerning the property of married women" (1869).

Another high priority for Cobbe was better education for women. As a young woman during the 1830s she had received what was considered a proper education at an extremely expensive boarding school in Brighton. At the end of her two years of academic studies, deportment lessons and training in languages, music and dance Cobbe returned home relieved "to have done with study." Not many months after leaving school she wrote with chagrin that:

> depth below depth of my ignorance revealed itself very unpleasantly! I tried to supply first one deficiency and then another till, after a year or two, I began to educate myself in earnest.[64]

Unwilling that further generations of women should be subjected to such valueless training, Cobbe joined the fight for higher education for women. She made one of the earliest contributions to the campaign for women's access to the universities when she presented a paper on "The Education of Women and how it would be affected by University Examinations" at the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science Conference in 1862.[65]

Cobbe recognized that women were stultified by both a lack of education and a want of stimulating employment. Pampered middle-class women were denied these remedies for ennui by indulgent fathers who "give their daughters diamonds when they crave education and twist round their necks the serpents of idle luxury and pleasure when they ask for wholesome employment."[66] Once again, Cobbe's personal experience underlay her insistence that women be given access to the professions. As the daughter of a wealthy member of the landed gentry, Cobbe was expected to lead a life of domesticity. However, she had a strong desire to be a writer, a desire she had to hide from her father whom she knew would oppose her wishes to publish her ideas.[67] Following his death she embarked upon a career in journalism and thereby augmented her inherited allowance of £200 per year.

The campaign to reform the Marital Causes Act probably engaged more of Cobbe's energy than any other of the women's issues with which she became involved. Those who took up this cause sought a change to the marriage laws which would allow women to obtain legal separation from physically abusive husbands. Cobbe's article, "Wife Torture in England," presents the view that the political and legal inferiority imposed upon women by British society was a contributing factor to the prevalence of domestic violence.[68]

For herself, Cobbe eschewed marriage in favour of the close female friendship she experienced with Mary Lloyd, her companion of thirty-five years. Like Charlotte Cushman, Rosa Bonheur, and her neighbour Harriet St. Leger, each of whom shared their lives with female partners, Cobbe preferred the company of women although she also had some male friends.[69] Her circle of acquaintance within the feminist community was vast. In her autobiography she claims: "I think I may boast of having come into contact with nearly all the gifted Englishwomen of the Victorian era."[70] She was a member of Clementia Taylor's activist circles and went to tea at Kate Amberley's home. Feminists from the United States and France gave an international dimension to her list of contacts. During her first trip to Rome, she met the American actress Charlotte Cushman and her feminist associates

Harriet Hosmer, Emma Stebbins, Isa Blagden, Mary Somerville and Mary Lloyd, among others. Through Mary Lloyd, she made the acquaintance of the French painter Rosa Bonheur. One can imagine that Susan Durant was included in Cobbe's mental list of "gifted Englishwomen." Her status as one of the Queen's favourite sculptors would have easily qualified her for inclusion among this élite.

Durant and Cobbe had a number of things in common in addition to their shared interest in women's suffrage. Both were members of the landed gentry. Cobbe's family were Irish gentry; Durant was related to the Dugdales of Wroxall, Warwickshire and the Durants of Sharpham in Devon.[71] Their social circles overlapped. Kate Amberley records visits with each of them in her diary.[72] Cobbe's autobiography makes reference to "M. le Baron de T.," a holder of the Legion of Honour, who was "a distinguished and very agreeable old French gentleman of my acquaintance."[73] From her description it is clear that this man was Baron Henri de Triqueti, Durant's beloved sculpting Master. Another member of Cobbe's social set was Sir John Bowring whose wife Durant mentions visiting.[74] Lady Bowring later appears as one of the "many distinguished Vice-Presidents" in attendance at Kate Amberley's presidential address to the West of England Branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage in February 1872.[75]

Another feature they had in common was a lack of interest in marriage. One of Cobbe's stated purposes in publishing her life-story was to demonstrate the benefits of spinsterhood:

> how pleasant and interesting, and withal, I hope, not altogether useless a life is open to a woman, though no man has ever desired to share it, nor has she seen the man she would have wished to ask her to do so.[76]

Durant's attitude toward marriage is presented more jocularly in a letter to her friend Emma Wallis whom she thanks for a house warming gift. "Tell Mr. Wallis I am very proud of my wedding present which I consider the dessert service to be and am saucy enough to think I have the best of it, being minus the husband!"[77] Whereas Cobbe's rejection of matrimony was based on a dislike of the institution itself and a preference for the companionship of women, Durant's position appears to be founded mostly on a desire for personal autonomy.[78] As a single woman she retained the right to own property and make contracts, functions which were crucial to the conduct of a sculpting profession. For her emotional needs she turned to lovers. From 1864 until her death she conducted love affairs with George Grote and Henri de Triqueti, both of whom were married, elderly gentlemen at the time. Until she became pregnant by Triqueti, she may indeed have had "the best of it," enjoying both the legal advantages of spinsterhood and the warmth of intimate relationships.

Another feminist, Anna Jameson, is mentioned once only in Durant's extant correspondence but the phrasing of the passage bearing her name hints at a budding acquaintance between the two women. Durant is presumably replying to a question from Emma Wallis when she says: "I am not very familiar with Mrs. Jameson's life history--I know she was separated from her husband."[79] The sculptor and the art historian shared a number of friends in common, any one of whom could have introduced them to each other. Perhaps Durant had gone along with her friend Elizabeth Blackwell to the Thursday evening gatherings of feminists and artists at Anna Jameson's home. Or, she may have met the feminist art historian through their mutual friends: Harriet Grote, or the Triquetis. Whatever the case, Durant did come into contact with Anna Jameson, an important figure in the Victorian women's movement.

Jameson's life history contributed greatly to her feminist sympathies. Straightened family circumstances obliged her to take up the only honourable profession open to middle class women during the early decades of the nineteenth century, that of governess. This she did intermittently for fifteen years before she married an alcoholic husband whose employment took them to Canada. In 1838 she returned to Britain alone and remained separated from her husband thereafter. Her views about the rights of women were profoundly shaped by her experience of work and marriage and influenced by the convictions of close friends such as Harriet

Grote and Lady Byron. Beginning in 1834, she wrote frequently on women's status in society. I have already discussed her article on the "Character of Women, Moral, Political and Historical" (1834-35) which examines the female characters in Shakespeare. Subsequent essays: "On the relative social position of mothers and governesses"(1842), "Woman's Mission and Woman's Position"(1843), and her book Sisters of Charity and the Communion of Labour (1859) argue for better educational and occupational opportunities for women and for a single standard of morality to be applied to both sexes.

As both an art historian and a feminist, Jameson was an influential role model for a younger generation of female activists such as Barbara Bodichon, Anna Mary Howitt and Bessie Rayner Parkes, all of whom aspired to be artists. She heartily supported Bodichon's petition for married women's property rights; personal experience as the wife of a spendthrift husband made her strongly sympathetic to this cause. Clara Thomas, one of Jameson's more recent biographers, claims that the Englishwoman's Journal was originally the brain-child of Jameson, who acted as a mentor to the women of the Langham Place Circle.[80] Certainly the Journal's emphasis on work for women reflects Jameson's viewpoints.

Her social orbit included women whose unconventional career choices marked them with a certain public notoriety. While visiting her friend John Gibson in Rome, Jameson met his student Harriet Hosmer and befriended her. Hosmer wrote to Jameson on 10 August 1849 with news of her celebrated statue of Zenobia.[81] When Elizabeth Blackwell presented her lectures on medicine as a profession for women, in 1859, Jameson was in attendance.[82] Anna Jameson would have been congenial company for Durant whose own interest in professional careers for women was reflected in her work and her friendships with female doctors and writers.

Two of Durant's portrait sitters are remarkable for their strong convictions about the status of women. Harriet Beecher Stowe, known best for her abolitionist sentiments, was also a confederate of numerous women's rights advocates within the arts community at home and abroad. Her friendships with Kate Amberley, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Cushman's feminist circle in Rome have been documented in earlier chapters of this thesis. She also had connections with the Blackwell sisters and the Alcotts in the United States dating from the late 1830s.[83] Even closer to home, her sister Catherine Beecher wrote articles in favour of higher education for women from the mid-1820s onward.[84] Stowe firmly supported efforts to "emancipate" women from the narrow confines of the private sphere by endorsing access to the professions and suffrage. Her belief that women should be free to take up employment is evident in the conversation she had with Harriet Hosmer in Rome. Stowe's letter of congratulation to Lady Amberley following her pro-suffrage speech at Stroud indicates her interest in women's right to vote.[85]

The second of the sitters, Dr. Elizabeth Garrett, is noted for her persistence in obtaining the qualifications to practice medicine despite concerted public opposition. She and her sisters Louisa and Millicent were deeply involved in women's rights causes throughout the nineteenth century. It was with Louisa that Elizabeth Garrett attended the first meetings of the Kensington Society where papers on issues of women's rights were presented and discussed in 1865.[86] And, during the long hard struggle to gain access to medical training and certification, Louisa offered Elizabeth aid and comfort. Inspired by the example of her older sisters, Millicent Garrett devoted herself to the suffrage campaign. Elizabeth Garrett's name was entered on the British Medical Register in 1869 under the category of certified Apothecary; a year later she received her medical degree from the Sorbonne.

Once established as a doctor, she openly supported women's aspirations for suffrage, education and employment. In 1870 she began a career in local politics as an elected member of the London School Board for Marylebone district.[87] For over thirty years she maintained an interest in both medicine and politics. In addition to running a medical practice, she became a member of the board of the New Hospital for Women in London (later Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital) and president of the board of the London School of Medicine for Women. When her husband James, the mayor of Aldeburgh, died in office in 1907, Elizabeth took over his duties. In 1908 the townspeople elected her to the post.[88]

It is significant that these two highly visible feminists figure among the list of sitters portrayed by a female sculptor. Both Elizabeth Garrett and Harriet Beecher Stowe were known to Durant personally and her decision to make them the subjects of her work suggests a desire on her part to promote their ideals.[89]

Among all the names of feminists contained in Durant's papers, the Blackwell sisters stand out in sharp relief. Much like the Garretts, each of the five Blackwell daughters became active proponents of women's rights. By contrast, all of them rejected offers of marriage, preferring to devote themselves to non-traditional careers. Although it was not unusual for feminists to abstain from marriage, it is remarkable that five women in one family would make such a choice. Recent work by Alice Rossi suggests that the Blackwell women were emotionally unprepared to enter into intimate relationships.[90] Instead, they maintained an intense involvement in the lives of their siblings despite the vast geographical distances that separated them. Furthermore, four of the sisters took one or more orphaned children into their homes and raised them to adulthood. These children, none of whom was ever legally adopted, fulfilled very practical roles in the homes of their foster mothers. The children provided companionship and household help in exchange for a comfortable home. Elizabeth's child, Kitty Barry, remained a constant companion until the death of her beloved "Doctor."[91] The Blackwell penchant for collecting stray children had significant ramifications for Susan Durant. However, before discussing these, I will give some background to the relationship between the sculptor and two of the sisters, Anna and Elizabeth.

Various members of the Blackwell family figure in Durant's correspondence during the years 1864 to 1870, representing six of the eight years from which documents by or about the sculptor have been preserved. By the time the correspondence opens, Durant was well-acquainted with Anna Blackwell, her brother Howard, their British cousin Kenyon, and his wife Marie. Elizabeth Blackwell finally appears in the letters during 1870.

The Blackwell family emigrated from Bristol to the United States of America in 1832 because Samuel Blackwell wanted to experiment with the cultivation of sugar beets, an alternative to the sugar cane industry which depended on slave labour. Shortly after their arrival in New York, Samuel Blackwell enroled his family in the local anti-slavery society. In 1848, Anna Blackwell, the eldest daughter of the family, returned to Britain along with Howard who was to join Kenyon and Samuel Blackwell at their iron foundry in Birmingham. The following year, Elizabeth Blackwell came to England with her American medical degree hoping to find a hospital in which to obtain surgical training. When her inquiries proved fruitless, she and Anna moved to Paris where Elizabeth entered an obstetrical program at La Maternité. Once there, Anna Blackwell established herself in a journalistic career, acting as the European correspondent for several American newspapers. She wrote a regular gossip column entitled "Fidelitas" and augmented her journalistic income by publishing poetry.[92] Paris remained her home even after Elizabeth Blackwell had completed her training and returned to New York. Other members of the Blackwell clan came and went from Anna's home regularly. The youngest sister, Ellen, stayed with her in 1855 while attending the School of Design in Paris. Howard Blackwell visited whenever his work as the Bombay representative of the East India Company permitted. One August, probably in the summer of 1867, Durant wrote from Paris that she had an invitation to go for a drive with Anna Blackwell and to meet "Dr. Emily Blackwell and another brother who lives in America."[93]

This invitation and other evidence from the Durant letters suggests that Anna Blackwell and Susan Durant shared more than a passing acquaintance. The two women dined together at Anna's home quite often and Durant reciprocated by lending books to her friend. When Howard Blackwell died unexpectedly in March of 1866, Durant was engaged to make a commemorative portrait medallion.[94]

Anna was perhaps the most unusual of the Blackwell women. She spent the summer and autumn of 1845 at Brook Farm, a newly established "Fourierist" community in West Roxbury, Massachusetts.[95] This experiment in constructing a new social order was based on the principles laid down by the French theorist, Charles Fourier, in his Théories des quatre mouvements et des déstinées générales:

Prospectus et annonce de la découverte (1808). His ultimate goal was a utopia in which men and women were equal, free, and given opportunities in all areas of occupation. Adherents to the philosophy lived in large communal groups, or phalanxes, which replaced the patriarchal family unit.[96] Encouraged by Albert Brisbane, an American exponent of the movement, Anna embraced Fourier's ideals of equality of the sexes and "unlimited association," declaring that she believed in "a continual change of lovers" in place of the traditional family structure.[97] For a bright, determined woman like Anna Blackwell, the teachings of Fourier offered an enticing chance to escape the confines of the nineteenth-century cult of domesticity to which middle-class women were destined. Although she did not remain long at Brook Farm, she later spent short periods of time at other phalanxes. Her decision to move to France in 1849 may have been partly influenced by her involvement in Fourierism which had a profound impact upon nineteenth-century French feminism. Anna Blackwell's feminist views about women's work and the equality of the sexes likely formed an important part of the fabric of her friendship with Durant.

Elizabeth Blackwell was an imposing woman. The first female doctor to be registered in the United States and in England, she was celebrated and aided by virtually all of London's women's rights activists. Her friendships with Barbara Bodichon and members of the Langham Place Circle have been noted earlier. Through them she encountered Frances Power Cobbe, Anna Goldsmid, George

Eliot, Peter and Clementia Taylor and a host of other London feminists.[98] Her attitude toward the place of women in society was more conservative than the views expressed by Anna and another sister Marian. Although she had gone through a phase of sympathy for Fourier's philosophy of "free association," she recanted and reaffirmed the "Divine marriage institution" promising to "always support it by precept" and declaring "all those who upset it [to be] fools and infidels."[99] Elizabeth Blackwell's reply to Marian's news that she was serving on an Education Committee for the first convention on Women's Rights in America, at Worchester, Massachusetts (1850) was cautious.

> In my own mind I have settled it [organizing committee] as a society to respect, to feel sympathy for, to help incidentally, but not--for me--to work with body and soul. I cannot sympathise fully with an anti-man movement . . . and I think the true end of freedom may be gained better in another way and shall always support it.[100]

Nine years later, after Elizabeth had surmounted the barriers erected against women obtaining an education in medicine, her tone had changed. Although she still subscribed to an essentialist view of women, she adamantly stated that they were uniquely qualified to give leadership in the medical profession. In one of her lectures to women in London during 1859 she presented her case:

> What special contribution can women make to medicine? Not blind imitation of men, nor thoughtless acceptance of whatever may be taught by them, for this would endorse the widespread error that the human race consists chiefly of men. Our duty is loyalty to right and opposition to wrong, in accordance with the essential principles of our own nature.[101]

In part, the special contribution to which Blackwell referred was an emphasis on prevention of illness through sanitary and moral reforms. She felt strongly that such programs were the responsibility of government; with this view in mind, she helped to found the National Health Society to agitate for change. Unlike her colleague, Elizabeth Garrett, Blackwell did not support the CD Acts. The stance she took was closely allied to that of Josephine Butler who called for a single standard of morality to be applied to both sexes equally. Realizing that change could best be effected through political channels, Blackwell joined the Committee of the Society for Promoting the Return of Women as Poor Law Guardians during the 1870s. This pressure group sought to have women installed in municipal government offices. Their efforts bore fruit in 1875 when Martha Merrington was elected to the position of Poor Law Guardian.[102]

Elizabeth Blackwell became a close friend and confidante of Durant. Together they raised funds to assist the Crown Princess of Prussia with the relief of soldiers wounded in the Franco-Prussian war (1870).[103] The two women made an admirable team. Both were well-known to the general public because of their outstanding professional activities and they also were in touch with a significant portion of the London feminist community. Thus, they had a large constituency to whom they could appeal for subscriptions. Furthermore, each had a unique practical contribution to make. Blackwell had gained valuable experience in training and deploying nurses for battlefield work during the American civil war and she was anxious to be of use in the European conflict.[104] Durant's portrait work for the Albert Memorial Chapel at Windsor had led to a firm friendship with the Crown Princess of Prussia (Victoria, Princess Royal of Great Britain) whose likeness she had modelled at the Neue Palais in Potsdam in 1865. She was able to establish contact with the Crown Princess in 1870 on the basis of that relationship, and to make an offer of aid.

On a more personal level, when Durant bore a son out of wedlock in 1869, Elizabeth Blackwell took the child into her own home, thus sparing her friend the ignominy (and potential financial ruin) allotted to "fallen women." The Blackwell family habit of informally adopting orphans made it relatively easy for Elizabeth to explain the sudden appearance of an infant at her Burwood Place home. She told her grown daughter Kitty that Henry Paul Harvey was a "little baby patient, whose parents are to be away . . . a charming little fellow of eight months old, who will be under my care, probably for some years."[105] He remained with Elizabeth and Kitty for nearly three years, enjoying the attentions of two nurses and "Miss Durant." Following Susan Durant's death in 1873, two-and-a-half-year-old Paul, was taken from Burwood Place to live with the widowed and remarried Marie Blackwell and her husband M. Drousart.

Throughout the child's sojourn in England and afterward, Elizabeth Blackwell never revealed the secret of his parentage. Up to the present time, the Blackwell family papers have preserved what Hays refers to as "a certain mystery about the baby's background, his connection with Dr. Elizabeth, and his sudden appearance in her home."[106] My examination of Durant's last will and testament brought to light her hidden child, "Henry Paul Harvey otherwise Henry Paul Harvey Durant," who was commended to the guardianship of Mr. John Christopher Lethbridge (solicitor and chief executor of her estate), Baron Henri de Triqueti, and Thomas Rammohun Roy Davison, also executors.[107] However, Baron Triqueti proved to be much more than one of the boy's three guardians; Paul Harvey's school and university records, and his marriage certificate show Triqueti to be his father.[108] Paul's birth, which took place in Paris, 1 October 1869, was not recorded by British consular officials although such records were normally kept on foreign-born children of British parentage. However, as Claire Tomalin notes, "an illegitimate baby could go unregistered up to 1874--as Wilkie Collins's first two children by Martha Rudd did--or it could have been registered under a false name."[109] Tomalin states further that although the French were more scrupulous about birth records, many are no longer extant because the archives for the Paris region were destroyed during the Commune in 1871.[110]

Two pieces of circumstantial evidence indicate that Durant had a special place in Paul Harvey's affections although she died when he was just two years old. Firstly, on 7 February 1924, Paul wrote a letter to the National Portrait Gallery offering to donate his collection of portrait medals of the Victorian royal family made by Susan Durant. He clearly valued these reductions of her life-size medallions for the Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor and wished to find a public institution which would appreciate them. "I am reluctant to destroy them, and equally so to leave them to the mercy of persons who are unlikely to be interested in the medallions themselves or their author."[111] Secondly, Paul and his wife Ethel had only one child, Dorothy Susan, who was called by the name Susan.[112] These pieces of evidence support the view that Durant was Paul's natural mother whom he memorialized in his donation to the National Portrait Gallery and in the naming of his own child. Neither Kitty, nor the Drousarts were accorded such treatment.

It was not until Kitty relocated Paul, twenty years after he was taken from her, that she learned something of his family background. Anna Blackwell, in what appears to have been a fit of jealousy over Kitty's rapture at the reunion with Paul, revealed that he was the illegitimate son of a "wealthy and respectable family."[113] Undeterred, Kitty remained a faithful friend to Paul, later becoming godmother to his daughter and caring for her during the Harveys' absences on foreign service.

Although shared views about women's rights would not be a prerequisite of a relationship as close as that between Susan Durant and Elizabeth Blackwell, the probability of agreement is great. By harbouring Durant's child, Blackwell, a single woman herself, risked her own reputation and livelihood. Such an undertaking is more easily conceived in support of a like-minded individual.

ARTISTS

People associated with the visual and performing arts constitute another easily identifiable grouping in Durant's social circle. Helena Faucit (Lady Martin), the Shakespearean actress, has been discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis. Faucit's desire to emphasize the moral nature of women through her theatrical portrayals of the great heroines of Shakespeare resonates with Durant's and Hosmer's choices of heroic women as subjects for sculpture. Durant's letters record two occasions, in 1866 and 1868, when she was a guest at the Martin home.[114]

The sculptors who are mentioned in her papers are Mary Lloyd, Foley's student Mr. Lawes, and Baron Henri de Triqueti. Lloyd was a student of John Gibson in Rome and a member of Charlotte Cushman's coterie there. A sympathy with feminism can be inferred from her attachment to this circle of artists and her close relationship with Frances Power Cobbe. It is unclear whether Durant's contact with Mary Lloyd was dependent upon an introduction made by Cobbe or vice versa.

Whatever the case, the only female sculptor named in Durant's correspondence is one who had feminist leanings.[115]

Mr. Lawes's name appears in a list of people Durant was expecting to visit.[116] In a letter of 31 March [1867] she states that she was looking forward to seeing Mr. Lawes who was a student of the sculptor John Henry Foley.[117] Durant makes a favourable passing comment about Foley who had a very successful career. He evidently was positively disposed to women entering the sculpting field as he included Mary Grant among his students.[118]

Baron Triqueti was both Durant's sculpting Master and her collaborator in the decoration of the Albert Memorial Chapel. During the late 1860s and early 1870s he was also her lover. Born in 1802, he was approximately thirty years her senior, an age-difference which he acknowledged in earlier years when he described her as "ma seconde et bien aimée fille."[119] Triqueti was married to Julia Forster (1812-1870), granddaughter of artist Thomas Banks and daughter of the chaplain to the British Consul in Paris.[120] Triqueti's sculpting career was very successful , especially under the July Monarchy, and his studio in Paris was known as a centre for the innovative production of modern industrial art.[121] He updated the Italian craft of tarsia, producing large-scale murals made from tinted marble.[122] In England, the Albert Memorial Chapel is decorated with inlaid marble wall scenes and a cenotaph bearing the recumbent figure of the Prince Consort all by Triqueti's hand. The Marmor Homericum, a gift from George Grote to University College London, is another example of Triqueti's tarsia work.[123] He also experimented with ivory inlay work on decorative bronze vases.[124]

Durant's letters reveal her admiration for Triqueti's work and his humanitarian undertakings. To her father she wrote: "Mr. de Triqueti's works are colossal I never saw such activity."[125] During the Franco-Prussian war she described Triqueti's efforts to care for the wounded by organizing a 300 bed hospital in Paris and offering to outfit his country château with ten more beds for the same purpose.[126]

Other women known to have strong feminist convictions were equally impressed with the Baron. Anna Jameson described him in one letter as "an eminent sculptor . . . who is a most delightful character." In another note she applauds him as "a fine artist and an admirable creature altogether."[127] Harriet Beecher Stowe, who was introduced to Triqueti by Durant, recorded her feelings after an evening at his home. "I can't describe the beauty, grace, delicacy, and fullness of devotional feeling in these people. He is one of the loveliest men I ever saw."[128] Frances Cobbe was not as effusive in her praise of Triqueti, but her muted appreciation is the more significant given her general coolness toward men. She refers to him as "a distinguished and very agreeable old French gentleman of my acquaintance."[129] Kate Amberley also warmed to him when she visited his studio with Harriet Grote.

> He is at the head of an institution here which answers to our "Working Men's College"--I assure you one felt much better, . . . for having been to that studio to see a man so full of talent & so successful, devoting so much time besides to what is good & helping others.[130]

Harriet Grote found him generous when she requested the use of one of his most striking works of art as an attraction at the 1861 exhibition of the Society of Female Artists. "My esteemed friend the Baron de Triqueti has been good enough to permit us (out of favour to myself personally) to exhibit his splendid sculptured vase, a work valued at 2,000 guineas."[131]

These testimonials to the fine character of Henri de Triqueti from women's rights advocates suggest that he was at least accepting of their feminism, perhaps even a promoter of it. That he took Durant as a student and, eventually, co-worker indicates that, unlike many of his colleagues, he condoned the inclusion of women in the profession of sculpting.[132]

The name of Frith appears frequently in Durant's papers. Mrs. Lucy R. Shilston, great niece of Emma Wallis, claims that this is William Powell Frith, the painter.[133] Durant tells of attending a Christmastime party at the Friths in 1864 where she met up with A.H. Layard, Mrs. Frith's kinsman. She enjoyed the company of the painter's grown daughters Eliza White and Caroline Blackwell on other occasions as well. Mr. and Mrs. White were dinner guests at her home in

November 1866. The Friths paid her a visit at her new residence at 3 Bryanston Place in December of the same year.[134]

William Frith is known to have encouraged female artists in their endeavour to obtain art education. Nunn notes that he "was the sponsor of many female students at the Royal Academy and other schools in the 1870s and 1880s."[135] In 1888, when he surveyed the impact of his efforts and those of others on women's art education he was gratified to note that "now they [female students at the Royal Academy Schools] are almost equal in number to the male students."[136] Joanna Mary Boyce (later Mrs. H.T.Wells), a feminist artist, found an influential friend in Frith whom she met at the time that his career was beginning to flourish.[137]

His concern for women artists extended beyond academic sponsorship to public endorsement of their work. One chapter of his book, My Autobiography and Reminiscences (1888), is devoted to recollections of the women painters that he knew. Nunn finds his memory to be too selective because:

> the names he mentions . . . are all painters or watercolourists: he is only concerned with his own medium. Female sculptors he ignores, as he does graphic artists or workers in other media not considered fine art.[138]

However, in view of his friendship with Durant, it is unlikely that he had a prejudice against female sculptors. His view of what constituted "fine art" may have been quite conservative, but his view of women seems to have been rather progressive. Frith's attention to female artists in his own medium implies a confident acceptance of them. Had he concentrated on women artists outside his own field, the reader might have assumed that he was exhibiting personal insecurities. Moreover, Frith was likely better qualified to judge the skill of other painters than he was to assess the ability of sculptors.

Another painter, Miss Wilkinson, gets very brief mention in Durant's correspondence. She was a friend of Emma Wallis who had introduced the watercolourist to the sculptor at a luncheon one day. Durant was sufficiently impressed with this woman to ask Emma to "please let me have your friend Miss Wilkinson's address as I want to call on her."[139] Without her first name it is difficult to trace this woman. Durant's request to Emma reveals that Miss Wilkinson's name was unfamiliar to her, making it likely that she was not a well-known artist. Nevertheless, her inclusion in the Durant letters indicates that Durant reached out to other female artists, perhaps using her own established reputation to facilitate their careers. During the 1860s and later she was well-placed to introduce rising artists to important patrons.

Of the seven acquaintances in the visual or performing arts named in the Durant letters, two can be construed as sympathetic to feminism. As professional artists, Mary Lloyd and Helena Faucit both had an interest in a widened sphere for women. They demonstrated this interest through their work and through the company they kept. Among the other artists, Foley, Triqueti and Frith can be characterized as facilitators of women's aspirations to be professional sculptors and painters. They were at least accepting of strong-minded women. Lawes and Wilkinson are enigmatic figures whose involvement with Durant is only briefly recorded.

THE ROYAL FAMILY

The royal family is another significant grouping of people known to Durant. The Queen and her daughters: Victoria, the Crown Princess of Prussia, Alice, Princess Louis of Hesse, and Princess Louise spent more time in the company of Susan Durant than did the other members of the family. The following section will concentrate on their relationships with the sculptor.

Queen Victoria's antagonism to "this mad, wicked folly of "Women's Rights" has already been noted.[140] However, her views on the place of women in society were more complex than this statement would lead one to believe. She employed female artists to execute portraits of the royal children; Henrietta Ward was commissioned to paint several portraits, Mary Thornycroft and Susan Durant were engaged to sculpt and to teach modelling to Princess Louise.[141] The efforts of other women artists were supported, too. Elisabet Ney, a talented German sculptor, was granted the opportunity to model a bust of the Queen.[142] As well, Queen Victoria violated a long-standing rule that actresses were not permitted to socialize with the sovereign and contrived to meet up with Helena Faucit "accidentally."[143]

When Emily Faithfull organized the first press operated by women, in 1860, she applied to the Queen for approval of the venture. The Monarch responded to Faithfull's description of the Victoria Press with "an assurance of Her Majesty's interest in the office, and the kind expression of Her approbation of all such really useful and practical steps for the opening of new branches of industry for women."[144] The Englishwoman's Journal of July 1869 recorded a further display of support for women's work on the part of the Queen:

> The Queen, H.R.H. the Crown Princess of Prussia, and H.R.H. Princess Louise have become Patronesses of the London Society for Promoting the Employment of Women and have contributed toward its funds.[145]

However, she was adamantly opposed to women being placed "in the same position as to profession--as men."[146]

The Queen, like so many other women, saw the tide of public opinion turning with regard to the status of women but she was unable to commit herself decisively for or against that change. The demands of her public office exacerbated the problem. She recognized the "anomaly [of] her own position."[147] As the reigning monarch, she was required to exercise the sort of power normally accorded to men, yet she felt it necessary to uphold traditional societal values to ensure the stability of the realm. The ambiguous nature of her public role is exhibited in her vacillating behaviour with regard to women's issues.

Queen Victoria's daughters were accustomed to seeing their mother occupied with the business of ruling. Consequently, they were receptive to a wider sphere of activity for women. Princess Louise's sympathy with feminist initiatives has been noted earlier in this thesis (illustration 4). In addition to her interest in female doctors and Josephine Butler's work with prostitutes, she exhibited a desire for the company of progressive women. By the Princess's request, the First Lord of the Admiralty held a dinner, in 1877, to which George Eliot was invited so that she might be introduced to the Princess. Setting aside royal protocol, Princess Louise "asked, immediately on arriving, to be presented to George Eliot, and at once sat down beside her and entered into friendly chat."[148]

Had she been free to pursue an occupation of her own, Princess Louise would likely have become a sculptor. Despite initial opposition from the Queen to the young Princess's requests for training in the plastic art, Louise was given lessons by a succession of sculptors: Mary Thornycroft, Susan Durant, and Edgar Boehm in the 1860s and 1870s. Later she attended classes at the National Art Training School (now the Royal College of Art).[149] Her own unsatisfied aspirations for a career were redirected into efforts to support the opening of occupational opportunities for other women. Hence, her patronage of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women. Better education for women was another cause to which she subscribed. She became the first president of the National Union for the Higher Education of Women.[150]

Princess Louise's efforts to improve the place of women in society accorded with those of her eventual husband, the Marquis of Lorne. He upheld the rights of women to be admitted to institutions of higher education and to enter the professions. While a student at St. Andrew's University, he wrote letters of protest over the exclusion of women from University lectures. His action was prompted by Sophia Jex-Blake's struggle to obtain training in medicine.[151] Similar concerns for the plight of women might have been one of the factors which attracted Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne to each other. Unlike her sisters, Princess Louise was permitted to marry a man of her own choosing.

Her sisters Victoria, the Crown Princess of Prussia, and Alice, Princess Louis of Hesse, supported Princess Louise's activities and entered into causes of their own.[152] In 1872 Princess Alice spearheaded an association "for the bettering of women's education and social position (of the middle class especially with regard to trade)."[153] These frauenvereine (women's unions) were established in her adopted home, the region of Hesse-Darmstadt. During the Franco-Prussian war, the Crown Princess of Prussia coordinated material and financial aid for wounded soldiers, receiving assistance from Susan Durant and Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell in London. Like her sister Princess Louise, the Crown Princess had a passion for sculpting (illustration 3). During Durant's visit to Potsdam, probably in 1865, she asked for one or two lessons to improve her modelling and toyed with the idea of setting up a joint studio with the sculptor. Again, although the Crown Princess was unable to undertake a career in art, she did her best to further Durant's prospects by introducing her to Gustav Waagen, the Director of the Berlin Museum.[154]

In her own words, Durant was "on the best terms with all the [royal] family, they are so friendly and gracious."[155] She spent months working at Windsor and Osborne and at the royal residences of the Crown Princess at Potsdam and Princess Louis of Hesse at Darmstadt.[156] The Queen liked her so much that she broke the "rules of Court etiquette" and ordered that Durant be "invited to lunch at the table of the Master of the Household with all the Lords and Ladies in Waiting."[157] Durant perceived this invitation to be a good omen for "the "status" of artists in general" and an intimation of "the Queen's kind feelings" toward her in particular. The Crown Princess was also taken with her portraitist. She responded with "shock and grief" at the news of Susan Durant's death declaring: "I liked her so much!"[158] Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess had an equally high opinion of Durant's work. In their letters to one another they commented on her success in capturing the likenesses of her sitters.[159]

Although Durant's involvement with the Princesses Victoria, Alice, and Louise began as a formal contractual arrangement, each of them befriended her, keeping up their contact with her after the original commission had been fulfilled. I have shown that all three of these women were sympathetic to some of the feminist issues of their time, particularly the cause of women's work. Part of their attraction to Susan Durant may have arisen from a mutual concern for the status of women. The relationship between Durant and Queen Victoria, though cordial, was based less on shared beliefs than on an appreciation for her skill as an artist.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

Susan Durant is known to have had affiliations with two art societies: the Society of Female Artists, of which I have already written in some detail, and the Fine Arts Club (now the Burlington Fine Arts Club). The latter was formed in 1857 by J.C.Robinson, the Marquis d'Anzeglio (Italian minister in London), and Baron Marochetti and had a membership of ninety-seven collectors.[160] Durant found herself in prestigious company. Among the original members were Sir Charles Eastlake, Lord Lansdowne, A.H.Layard, Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), John Ruskin, and Felix Slade. W.E.Gladstone, W.M.Rossetti, and J.A.M.Whistler joined at a later date.[161]

The Fine Arts Club met in the homes of its members and its purpose appears to have been to foster art appreciation amongst the populace. Durant's standing in the Club was significant enough that she was asked to hold "one of the "Fine Art Soirées" at Bryanston Place," her home. Complimented, and a little anxious, Durant agreed to the arrangement, noting: "But it is a serious undertaking!"[162] Her involvement in this group signifies both the esteem in which she was held by the Victorian art community and her own determination to succeed.

The contrast between the two art groups to which she belonged is striking. Clearly Durant did not shrink from engaging with the male art establishment where she had friends like Layard and Cole. Moreover, having attained a considerable degree of success in her profession, she supported the goals of the Society of Female Artists by showing her works at their exhibitions. In this way she helped to draw crowds to the exhibition and she provided a role-model for other female artists.

Certain striking patterns have emerged from my investigation of the twenty-nine friends and associations named in the Durant papers. I will describe these patterns and present a summary of my conclusions about them in the following section.

Firstly, there is a marked overlap between the different social groups of which Durant was a part. The radicals had important connections with members of the feminist community and with people in the visual arts. Kate Amberley and Harriet Grote were deeply involved in women's rights advocacy and Harriet contributed to the growth of the women's art movement. Mill, George Grote, and Lord Goldsmid were all closely related to feminists and they each used their political influence to support women's causes. Layard participated in the Victorian art scene through his membership in the Fine Arts Club and his family ties with the Friths. His friendship with Harriet Hosmer likely brought him in contact with Anna Jameson, Frances Power Cobbe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Mary Lloyd. Henry Cole's work with the schools of art and the South Kensington Museum put him in touch with an assortment of artists and politicians.

Surprisingly, the visual artists named in Durant's letters do not seem to have comprised a social group. What they had in common was their occupation and their relationship with Durant. However, some of them had links with other members of her social circle. Henri de Triqueti was known to the Grotes, Kate Amberley, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frances Power Cobbe, and Anna Jameson. Frith had family connections with Layard; and Mary Lloyd shared a home with Frances Cobbe.

By contrast, it appears that all the avowed feminists in Durant's correspondence knew each other and had spent time in each others' company. Their desire to improve the status of women superseded the social and political differences which distinguished them.

Queen Victoria and her daughters also had connections with other members of Durant's social set. The Queen had known George Grote from before her ascent to the throne, a relationship she renewed years later at a tea-party with the Grotes, C. Lyells, Browning and Carlyle.[163] Her interest in Helena Faucit has already been noted. Princess Victoria developed an enduring friendship with Baron Triqueti who had been her sculpting instructor when she was younger. The Baron was a guest at her residence, the Neue Palais in Potsdam, on various occasions.[164] Princess Louise's encounter with Elizabeth Garrett in Paris may have eventuated in further contact once the doctor established herself in Britain again.

Secondly, a subgroup of seventeen of the twenty-nine people examined were either visibly involved with one or more of the campaigns for the advancement of women or expressed their support of women's rights in a determined, though less direct manner. The indirect supporters include people employed in the visual or performing arts who used their professional activities to promote a more positive view of women. Others, such as Princess Louise, used their high social profiles to give respectability to selected women's organizations.

A third observation is that women predominate by twenty percent in the sample. Initially, this finding does not seem unusual. It is natural that a woman would favour friendships with members of her own gender, especially as Durant was a spinster. However, since the primary selection criterion for the sample was the availability of sufficient personal data to identify the social and political niche occupied by each individual, it is remarkable that women predominate. As I noted in the introduction, women are characteristically more easily forgotten after their deaths than are men. Furthermore, most of the women in the sample are known in their own right, whether married to prominent men or not. Durant's female friends and acquaintances were people who made a marked impact on nineteenth-century society; the overwhelming majority of them are remembered because of their contributions to Victorian feminism. All but three are memorialized in biographies or autobiographies which were written before the turn of the century. Most of them have received ongoing attention for the professional contributions they made to English-speaking society. Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell and Dr. Elizabeth Garrett have been the subjects of numerous biographies as has Harriet Beecher Stowe.[165] Anna Jameson's contributions to the history of art are still discussed in present-day articles.[166]

In light of the abundance of literature about her friends, Susan Durant is conspicuously missing from the history books. Despite her central role as a participant in the Victorian art community, she has been consigned to oblivion. Perhaps this discrepancy can be explained by the more tolerant attitude toward female novelists and essayists in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, although the doctors were viewed with considerable suspicion by those who were antagonistic to women's rights, their lectures and articles about health care had a practical use which helped to perpetuate their memories.

Because she was a sculptor, Susan Durant faced more impediments to being enroled in the collective memory than did her friends. As was mentioned, her primary vehicle of self-expression was a mute one. In addition, the works she made did not lend themselves to mass-production and consumption due to the cost of the materials and processes then available. But perhaps the most important obstacle to being remembered was Durant's social status. In general, artists were perceived to be slightly disreputable; they were pejoratively referred to as "Bohemians," that is gypsies, and assumed to be leading questionable lives. Female artists were doubly suspect in Victorian society where the double standard of morality required women to have spotless reputations and men simply to be discreet. Whether or not Susan Durant's secret child was discovered, nineteenth-century biographers would have had scruples about celebrating the life of a woman artist.

Finally, the occupational mix of Durant's acquaintances is notable. Aside from the two art societies to which she contributed and the six visual artists named in her letters, Durant's social circle is made up of people from various professional backgrounds. Politicians comprise the most frequently represented occupational group, numbering seven. The rest are members of the royal family, doctors, journalists, a novelist and an essayist, a civil servant, an actress, and an art historian. Artists, radical politicians and professional women dominate the sample. The common thread linking these three groupings is a sympathy for one or more of the Victorian feminist causes.

In summary, an analysis of Susan Durant's friendships reveals an informally connected network of men and women from differing political and social backgrounds; all of them are drawn from the middle classes or above. There are more women than men in the sample and the vast majority of these women are remembered for their professional activities. Fifty-nine percent of the people who were examined are known to have been involved in feminist causes. Still others appear to have been accepting of women who pursued non-traditional occupations. The only individual in this sample of Durant's acquaintances who was vocally opposed to women's rights is Queen Victoria. And her relationship with the sculptor was cordial but strictly business-oriented.

The make-up of Durant's social circle is strongly reminiscent of the political, social, and occupational mix characteristic of the feminist networks discussed in Chapter One of my thesis. Her friends were drawn from the full political spectrum, although the majority of her male acquaintances were radicals. A similar political combination is seen in the social circles of prominent feminists Clementia Taylor, Barbara Bodichon, Harriet Grote, and Kate Amberley.

Durant's acquaintances came from a variety of different occupations. Although a significant number of them were artists, they appear to have had little more in common than their work and their friendship with Durant. By contrast, many of those from differing occupations knew each other apart from Durant. Again, feminist circles were composed of just such a blend of professional people. This web of relationships in which Durant participated was not based on membership in the same political party or on a shared profession. Instead, the common element in her network of friends was a sympathetic attitude toward the advancement of women.

Among the women in my sample of Durant's friends, a little over half were married and one third were spinsters. This information accords with Banks's findings that sixty-two percent of the feminists born between 1828 and 1848 were married and living with their husbands; twenty-nine percent had never married.[167] Although most feminists did become wives, albeit unconventional ones, a significant number chose to remain single for professional reasons or because they disagreed with the legal institution of marriage. Durant, the Blackwell sisters, Frances Cobbe and Mary Lloyd deliberately rejected matrimony in company with a small but vigorous segment of the Victorian feminist community.

Another feature Durant had in common with members of the nineteenth-century feminist movement was her involvement in a self-help group. The Society of Female Artists was one of a collection of women's support groups founded to facilitate the movement of women into the professions. Durant was able to contribute to the Society's goals by using her reputation as a sculptor to enhance the image of the annual exhibition and to encourage aspiring female artists.

The accumulated data indicates that Durant chose to be involved with friends and associations which promoted women's rights. Moreover, Durant's attitudes towards marriage and women's suffrage accord with views held by members of the nineteenth-century feminist community. On the basis of this information, I suggest that Susan Durant was a feminist.

Testimony from a final, unnamed friend, lends further credence to this view. On 11 January 1873, the Queen (a magazine for "ladies") published a "biographical notice of Miss Durant, written by one who knew her as an artist and loved her as a friend."[168] The author portrays Durant as a person who was dedicated to personal excellence and the advancement of women.

> The powerful grasp of her intellect embraced with ardor all the great questions of the day, whether connected with the progress of science or the enfranchisement of women. In this latter question she was deeply interested, giving also every possible assistance to the improvement of female education, which she always insisted should make professional work possible in case of pecuniary necessity.[169]

In the next chapter, a selection of Durant's sculpture will be examined for additional evidence of a feminist agenda.

Notes

1. Rupert Gunnis, Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851 (London: the Abbey Library, 1964), s.v. Durant, Susan. Other entries on Durant can be found in the following: Emmanuel Benézit, ed., Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs de tous les temps et de tous les pays (Paris: Librairie Gund (new edition), 1971), s.v. Durant, Susan; British Biographical Archive (Microform), fiche 353, frame 315-16; Clara Erskine (Waters) Clement and Laurence Hutton, Artists of the Nineteenth Century and their Works (1894; reprint, New York: Arno, 1969), s.v. Durant, Susan; Penny Dunford, ed., Biographical Dictionary of Women Artists in Europe and America Since 1850 (New York; Toronto: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), s.v. Durant, Susan; La Grande Encyclopédie: Inventaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Lettres et des Arts (Paris: H. Lamirault et Cie, 1886), s.v. Durant, Susan; Maurice Grant, A Dictionary of British Sculptors from the Thirteenth Century to the Twentieth Century (London: Rockliff, 1953), s.v. Durant, Susan; Algernon Graves, Dictionary of Artists Who Have Exhibited Works in the Principle London Exhibitions from 1760-1893 (1901; reprinted, Bath: 1970), s.v. Durant, Susan; James Mackay, The Dictionary of Western Sculptors in Bronze (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1977), s.v. Durant, Susan; and Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1907-47), s.v. Durant, Susan. The entry in Clement and Hutton presents information which is echoed in all of the biographical dictionaries cited: "Durant, Susan D. (Brit.) Died in Paris in 1873. Educated in France, and first exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, in 1847. Was teacher to Princess Louise, and has executed medallion portraits (R.A., 1866) and busts of almost the entire Royal Family of England. Was a constant contributor to the Royal Academy, and was called by the London Art Journal (March 1873) "one of our most accomplished female sculptors." Her bust of the Queen (R.A., 1872) is in the Middle Temple, London, and the "Faithful Shepherdess," an ideal figure, executed for the Corporation of London, is in the Mansion House of that city. Among her other works are "Ruth" (R.A., 1869), a bust of Harriet Beecher Stowe, and monument to the King of the Belgians at Windsor." Additional information is provided by some of the entries. Graves, Gunnis and Bénézit note that Baron Henri de Triqueti was her teacher. Gunnis and the British Biographical Archive claim that she initially sculpted for enjoyment but, having discovered a talent for the work, soon became a professional artist. La Grande Encyclopédie gives her birth date as 1830, while Dunford suggests Durant was born in the early 1820s. Bénézit, La Grande Encyclopédie, and the British

Biographical Archive state that she was from a Devonshire family. The various dictionaries highlight different works by Durant; two, Gunnis and Mackay, mistakenly claim that the monument to King Leopold II was produced in collaboration with Triqueti. The commission records in Windsor show that Durant worked on this sculpture alone. RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 46. With regards to Durant's death, the British Biographical Archive notes that she died after a short illness at the home of Triqueti. Thieme-Becker states that she is buried in Père Lachaise cemetery, Paris, where her grave is marked by a funeral monument erected by Triqueti.

2. Baron Henri de Triqueti (1802-1874) began a distinguished sculpting career in Paris in 1831 when his contribution to the Salon of that year received a second-class medal. In 1842 he became a knight of the Legion of Honour. He was a prolific sculptor who received public commissions from the July Monarch duc Louis-Phillipe d'Orléans (reliefs for the bronze doors of the Church of the Madeleine, Paris) and Queen Victoria (cenotaph of Prince Albert and wall decorations for the Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor, 1864). He was a Neo-Classical sculptor who also did extensive experimentation with objets d'art of a quasi-industrial nature such as daggers, swords, and vases inlaid with ivory. Susan Durant was his favourite student. See La Grande Encyclopédie:Inventaire Raisonné des sciences, des lettres, et des arts (Paris: H.Lamirault et Cie), s.v. Triqueti, Henri Baron de; Stanislas Lami, Dictionnaire des sculpteurs de l'Ecole française au dix-neuvième siècle (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus reprint, 1970), s.v. Triqueti, Henri Baron de; and Jonathan P.Ribner, "Henri de Triqueti, Auguste Préault, and the Glorification of the Law under the July Monarchy," Art Bulletin 70 (September 1988): 486-501.

3. "Susan Durant, The Sculptor," The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper (London, 11 January 1873): 27.

4. The secretary for the Inner Temple regretfully informed me that the bust of Queen Victoria created by Durant in 1872 was destroyed by enemy action in the war of 1939-45.

5. Susan Durant, Paris, to George Durant, 11 January [1867], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 109.

6. Lucy R. Shilston, Typescript summary of recollections about Susan Durant, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 212/A 1-3.

7. On 29 July 1864 Kate Stanley (later Lady Amberley) records a visit she and Harriet Grote made to Durant at the Paris studio of Baron Henri de Triqueti, Durant's sculpting Master. Bertrand Russell and Pat Russell, eds., The Amberley Papers (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966 (first printing 1937), 1:314.

8. Susan Durant, Short diary, 16-27 November 1865, Durant Papers, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 37, Royal Archive, Windsor Castle.

9. Susan Durant, London, to Emma Wallis, 11 March 1866, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 60.

10. Harriet Grote, Oxtend, Surrey, to Frances von Koch, Stockholm, 13 October 1861 and 22 February 1862 in The Lewin Papers, ed., T.H.Lewin, 241-2, 249. A brief summary of the references about Durant in Harriet's Note Book is given in Martin Lowther Clarke, George Grote: A Biography (London: University of London, The Athlone Press, 1962), 93. When I wrote to the author asking after the Note Book, which was in his possession at the time of the biography's publication, I was informed that another researcher had borrowed the manuscript and never returned it. In the interval, the name and whereabouts of the researcher have been forgotten.

11. Susan Durant, "Ridgeway," to George Durant, London, 1 January 1865, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 2.

12. RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 2, 3, 16, 37, 42, 60, 61, 119.

13. Lewin, ed., Lewin Letters, 1:362-63.

14. Harriet Grote to J.S.Mill, October 1867; Harriet Grote to Helen Taylor, 11 November 1867 and 29 November 1868, The Mill-Taylor Collection, British Library of Political and Economic Science, 1:247, 21:298, 299, quoted in, Clarke, George Grote, 94-95. Harriet Grote had confided in Kate Amberley during the first year of the affair, but did not reveal the name of George's paramour. Russell and Russell, The Amberley Papers, 1:477-8.

15. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 22 March 1866, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 61. In this letter Durant makes a fond reference to Harriet Grote. A letter presumed to be written in 1867 names George among the guests at a dinner party in Durant's home. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 17 March [1867], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 119.

16. Lewin, ed., Lewin Letters, 250. Levine, Feminist Lives,24-25. Michael St. John Packe, The Life of John Stuart Mill (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954), 498.

17. Russell and Russell, Amberley Papers, 2:266

18. Ibid., 2:20, 47, 84.

19. Ibid., 2:275, 282.

20. Ibid., 2:282, 329-335; Packe, Mill, 498; and Queen Victoria to Theodore Martin, 29 May 1870, quoted in Carol Bauer and Lawrence Ritt, Free and Ennobled: Source Readings in the Development of Victorian Feminism (Oxford: Pergamon, 1979), 247.

21. Russell and Russell, Amberley Papers, 2:353.

22. Packe, Mill, 499; and Russell and Russell, Amberley Papers, 2:356, 391.

23. Harriet Grote, Collected Papers in Prose and Verse, 1842-62 (London: John Murray, 1862), 284.

24. Forster, Significant Sisters, 47.

25. Although the essay is not dated, it was likely written in conjunction with the Married Women's Property Rights campaign of 1858-60. H.Grote, Collected Papers, 284.

26. George Grote, Minor Works, 162-70 quoted in Clarke, George Grote, 165.

27. Russell and Russell, Amberley Papers, 2:260.

28. John Stuart Mill, Autobiography, ed. Max Lerner, Essential Works of John Stuart Mill (New York: Bantam, 1971), 112-13.

29. Harriet Grote to Frances von Koch, Stockholm, 22 February 1863, quoted in Lewin, Lewin Letters, 1:250.

30. Ibid., 1:278.

31. Kate Amberley's journal, 28 March 1867, Russell and Russell, Amberley Papers, 2: 25; and Packe, Mill, 498.

32. Lionel A. Tollemache and Beatrice L. Tollemache, Safe Studies (London: C.F. Hodgson and Son, 1884), 138.

33. Cornelia Carr, ed., Harriet Hosmer Letters and Memories (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1913), 172-73.

34. The other sculptors selected were: E.H. Bailey, J.H. Foley, W.C. Marshall, J.G. Lough, Patrick MacDowell, Frederick Thrupp, S.W. Wyon, H. Weekes, William Theed, J. Durham, E.B. Stephens, J. Hancock, and J.S. Westmacott. "Mayor and Mansion House," Common Council Committee Papers: General Purposes Committee, 21 & 22 March 1860, Corporation of London Records Office, Guildhall, London, 2-3.

35. Carr, ed., Harriet Hosmer, 172-73.

36. Joseph O. Baylen and Norbert J. Grossman, eds., The Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals, Vol. 2, 1830-1870 (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984), s.v. Layard, Austen Henry.

37. Susan Durant, Paris, to George Durant, 13 May 1869, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 169.

38. Susan Durant, London, to George Durant, 31 December 1864, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 3; and Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 13 December 1868, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 185.

39. Gordon Waterfield, Layard of Nineveh (London: John Murray, 1963), 5.

40. La Grande Encyclopédie, s.v. Durant, Susan.

41. Levine, Feminist Lives, 117.

42. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, Dictionary of National Biography (1917 ed.; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921-2), s.v., "Goldsmid, Sir Frances Henry"; "Goldsmid, Sir Isaac Lyon;" Russell and Russell, Amberley Papers, 2: 41; and Levine, Victorian Feminism, 66, 137.

43. Sir Moses Montefiore to Susan Durant, 3 December 1857, RA Vic. Add. Mss. T/286.

44. The information in this paragraph is primarily drawn from two sources: Stephen and Lee, eds., Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "Cole, Henry;" and Joseph O.

Baylen and Norbert J. Grossman, eds., Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals Vol. 2: 1830-1870 (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984), s.v. "Cole, Henry."

45. Susan Durant, Osborne House, Isle of Wight, to George Durant, 17 August 1866, Transcription of letter, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/212 C/7.

46. "Royal Academy 104th Exhibition," Art Journal (1872): 202.

47. Susan Durant, London, to Emma Wallis, 9 December [1866], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 98.

48. "Royal Academy Exhibition (3rd notice)," Times (London: 24 May 1866): 12.

49. A. S. and Henrietta Cole, eds., Henry Cole, Fifty Years of Public Work (1884).

50. Prince Arthur to Princess Louise, 16 January 1866, RA Vic. Add. Mss. A17/135.

51. The Concise Dictionary of National Biography: From Earliest Times to 1985 (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), s.v. Harvey, Daniel Whittle; and Algernon Graves, ed., The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors (London: Henry Graves and Co. and George Bell and Sons, 1905), s.v. Durant, Susan.

52. Banks, Becoming a Feminist: the Social Origins of 'First Wave' Feminism, 139-140. Levine tempers this interpretation of the statistical face of feminism by noting that women from more restrictive backgrounds also adopted feminist outlooks in reaction to family expectations. Levine, Feminist Lives,19.

53. Susan Durant, Paris, to George Durant, 7 July [1864], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 2; and Susan Durant, Potsdam, to George Durant, 11 September [1865], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 24. These letters were written during Lord Russell's second ministry.

54. Diary entries for 14 November 1865, 23 May 1866, 11 February 1869, Derek Hudson, Munby, Man of Two Worlds: the Life and Diaries of Arthur J. Munby 1828-1910 (London: John Murray, 1972), 226-227. Levine, Feminist Lives, 65, 119.

55. This term was commonly applied to women's rights advocates.

56. Hudson, Munby, Man of Two Worlds, 218. This passage is taken from an entry in Munby's diary dated 11 February 1865.

57. Ibid., 219.

58. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 18 February 1866, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 58.

59. Susan Durant, London, to Emma Wallis, 17 March [1867], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 119.

60. Susan Durant, London, to Emma Wallis, 22 May [1867], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 127.

61. My efforts at verifying this assumption have been unsuccessful thus far. Unfortunately, only the wording of the petition and the first half-dozen signatures are recorded in the archives of the Houses of Parliament.

62. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 113.

63. Frances Power Cobbe, The Duties of Women. A Course of Lectures (London: 1881), ii quoted in Levine, Victorian Feminism, 61.

64. Frances Power Cobbe, Autobiography (1894) quoted in Murray, Strong-Minded Women, 199-203.

65. Ibid., 199; and Caine, Victorian Feminists, 125.

66. Cobbe, The Duties of Women (2nd ed., 1881), 113 quoted in Levine, Feminist Lives, 148.

67. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 119.

68. Cobbe, " Wife Torture in England," 57.

69. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 121.

70. Frances Power Cobbe, Life of Frances Power Cobbe as told by Herself (London: Swan, Sonnenschein and Co., 1904), 2:204 quoted in Levine, Feminist Lives, 63.

71. Although unable to locate Susan Durant's birth certificate, I have been able to ascertain her family background from evidence in her letters and other primary source documents. Her relationship with the Dugdales is evinced by her signature, Susan Dugdale Durant, on the commission contract between her and the Corporation of the City of London. This finding is corroborated by a letter from Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, date, in which she mentions canvassing the Dugdales of Wroxall for money to alleviate the suffering of soldiers wounded in the Franco-

Prussian war of 1870. Other letters refer to visits to her uncle Richard Durant at Sharpham, Devon. RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 12, 101; X/2 212/D 12; Contract between Susan Durant and the Corporation of the City of London, CLRO: Comptroller's City Lands Deeds Box 118A no. 41; and L.G.Pine and F.S.A.Scot, eds., Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry (London: Burke's Peerage Ltd., 1952 ed., s.v. Dugdale of Wroxall Abbey; Durant of Pelham Place.

72. Russell and Russell, Amberley Papers, 314, 377, 471.

73. Cobbe, Life, 503.

74. Susan Durant, Ilfracombe, to George Durant, 1865, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 12.

75. Packe, Mill, 499.

76. Cobbe, Life excerpted in Murray, Strong-Minded Women, 163-64.

77. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, October 1866, Transcript of letter, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/212 C/10.

78. Cobbe, like Mill, deemed the marriage contract to be deleterious to the moral health of men and women alike. Caine, Victorian Feminists, 135.

79. Apparently Durant discussed Mrs. Jameson in a letter, now missing from the collection, or in a conversation with her friend Emma. The comment may have been prompted by word of her death in 1860. Because Durant's letter is undated it is difficult to be certain whether Jameson was alive at the time of writing. Susan Durant, Cambridge, to Emma Wallis, no date, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 95.

80. Clara Thomas, Love and Work Enough: The Life of Anna Jameson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 209.

81. Mrs. Steuart Erskine, ed., Anna Jameson: Letters and Friendships 1812-1860 (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1915), 263.

82. G. H.Needler, Letters of Anna Jameson to Ottilie van Goethe (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 225.

83. Elizabeth Blackwell befriended Harriet Beecher Stowe at the literary evenings held by the Beecher family. Fancourt, Dared to be Doctors, 19.

84. Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, 121, 128.

85. Russell and Russell, eds., The Amberley Papers, vol. II, p. 353. Joseph Leach, Bright Particular Star: The Life and Times of Charlotte Cushman, New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1970, p. 290.

86. Jo Manton, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (London: Adams and Charles Black, 1958), 160.

87. Ibid., 210.

88. Crawford et al., eds., Biographical Dictionary of British Women, s.v. Anderson, Elizabeth Garrett.

89. Susan Durant to Elizabeth Garrett, undated, held at the Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University, London.

90. Alice S. Rossi, ed., The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1973), 325-35.

91. Ibid., 336-37.

92. Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 87.

93. Susan Durant, Paris, to George Durant, 22 August [1867], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 150.

94. Susan Durant, Paris, to George Durant, 22 August [1865]; [January] 1866; 18 May 1866; 30 December [1866]; 22 August [1867], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 16, 54, 69, 104, 150.

95. Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 56.

96. For a fuller explanation of Fourierism see Moses, French Feminism, 90-98.

97. Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 57.

98. Ishbel Ross, Child of Destiny: the Life Story of the First Woman Doctor (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1950), 242-43.

99. Elizabeth Blackwell, Pioneer Work in Opening the Medical Profession to Women (New York: Longmans, 1895) n.p. quoted in Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 70.

100. Fancourt, Dared to be Doctors, 178-79.

101. Dorothy Clarke Wilson, Lone Woman: The Story of Elizabeth Blackwell (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), 366.

102. Levine, Victorian Feminism, 71.

103. Susan Durant, London, to Countess Brühl, Potsdam, 25 August 1870; and undated letter, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 202, 212/D 11.

104. Wilson, Lone Woman, 384-87.

105. Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 173.

106. Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 173. None of the other published sources which I consulted make mention of a child born to Durant and Triqueti.

107. Last will and testament of Susan Durant, 15 May 1872 (proved 30 January 1873), held at the Public Record Office, Family Records Division, Somerset House, London.

108. Frederick J. Salt, ed., Rugby School Register 1858-1891 (Rugby: George Over (Rugby) Ltd, 1952), Entrances in May 1883, s.v. Harvey, Henry Paul; Joseph Foster, ed., Oxford Men 1880-1892 (Oxford: J. Parker and Co., 1893), s.v. Harvey, Henry Paul; Marriage certificate for Henry Paul Harvey, Bachelor, and Ethel Frances Persse, Spinster, 6 August 1896, Portswood, Southampton, no. 89.

109. Claire Tomalin, The Invisible Woman: The Story of Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens (London: Penguin, 1990), 122, 219 n. 39.

110. To date I have been unable to locate the notice of his birth in the public records of France, either. Hays assumes that Susan Durant was Harvey's adoptive mother. However, she is apparently not aware of his connection to Triqueti, and hence of Triqueti's relationship with Durant.

111. Sir Henry Paul Harvey, Dorset, to the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, 7 February 1924, Collection file on Susan Durant, National Portrait Gallery, London.

112. Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 266.

113. Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells, 265.

114. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 18 February 1866, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 58; and Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 1868, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 180.

115. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 22 May [1867], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 127.

116. Lawes is perhaps best remembered as the defendant in a libel suit Belt v. Lawes which was concluded in 1884. Read, Victorian Sculpture, 66.

117. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 31 March [1867], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 121.

118. Read, Victorian Sculpture, 69.

119. Baron Henri de Triqueti, London, to Emma Wallis, 4 May 1866, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 59.

120. C. F.Bell, The Annals of Thomas Banks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 210.

121. Jonathan P. Ribner, "Henri de Triqueti, Auguste Préault, and the Glorification of Law under the July Monarchy," Art Bulletin 70 (September 1988): 498; La Grande Encyclopédie: Inventaire Raisonné des sciences, des lettres, et des arts (Paris: H. Lamirault et Cie.), s.v. Triqueti, Baron Henri de.

122. Harold Osborne, ed., An Illustrated Companion to the Decorative Arts (Oxford: Wordsworth by arrangement with Oxford University Press, 1975), s.v. Intarsia.

123. Russell and Russell, eds., Amberley Papers, 1:471; and Susan Durant's diary, 10 November 1865, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 37 4.

124. La Grande Encyclopédie, s.v. Triqueti, Baron Henri de; and Lewin, ed., Lewin Letters,1:233.

125. Susan Durant, Paris, to George Durant, 28 December [1866], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 103.

126. Susan Durant, London, to Emma Wallis, 22 August [1870], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 212/D 11.

127. Needler, ed., Letters of Anna Jameson, 132; and Erskine, ed., Anna Jameson, 204.

128. Stowe, ed., Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe, 289.

129. Cobbe, Life, 503.

130. Russell and Russell, Amberley Papers, 1:314.

131. Lewin, ed., Lewin Letters, 1:233.

132. The English sculptor John Gibson is an interesting example. He emphatically refused to take female students until he saw daguerreotypes of Harriet Hosmer's work. Realizing her to be a serious artist with great ability, he accepted her into his workshop. Leach, "Harriet Hosmer," 11.

133. Typescript notes by Lucy R. Shilston, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 212/A 5.

134. Susan Durant to George Durant, 31 December 1864, R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 3; Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 31 December 1864, R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 4; Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 25 November 1866, R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 94; Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 22 [December 1866], R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 101; and Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 31 March [1867], R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 121.

135. Nunn, Victorian Women Artists, 132.

136. William Powell Frith, My Autobiography and Reminiscences (London: 1888), 469 quoted in Yeldham, Women Artists in France and England, 1:31.

137. Marsh and Nunn, Women Artists, 48, 178.

138. Nunn, Victorian Women Artists, 132.

139. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 9 December [1866], R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 98.

140. Bauer and Ritt, eds., Free and Ennobled, 247.

141. Richard Mullen and James Munson, Victoria: Portrait of a Queen (London: BBC books, 1987), 64.

142. Jan Fortune and Jean Burton, Elisabet Ney (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1870), 69.

143. Mullen and Munson, Victoria, 90.

144. Lacey, ed., Bodichon and Langham Place, 283.

145. Englishwoman's Journal 12 (July 1869): 224.

146. Bauer and Ritt, eds., Free and Ennobled, 247.

147. Bauer and Ritt, eds., Free and Ennobled, 247.

148. Gordon S. Haight, ed., Selections from George Eliot's Letters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 486.

149. David Duff, The Life Story of H.R.H Princess Louise Duchess of Argyll Bath: Cedric Chivers Ltd., 1971), 338; Read, Victorian Sculpture, 355; and Letter of Prince Arthur to Princess Louise, 16 January 1866, R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. A/17 135.

150. Paul Atterbury, ed., The Parian Phenomenon: A Survey of Victorian Parian Porcelain Statuary and Busts (Shepton, Beauchamp, Somerset: Richard Dennis, 1989), 266.

151. Elizabeth Longford, ed., Darling Loosy: Letters to Princess Louise 1856-1939 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1991), 27.

152. Wake, Princess Louise, 96.

153. Duff, Life of Princess Louise, 211.

154. Susan Durant, Potsdam, to George Durant, 16 September [1865]; 9 October [1865]; and 5 November [1865], R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 27, 30, 31.

155. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 31 December 1864, R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 4.

156. Susan Durant, Entretat, to George Durant, n.d., RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 18; Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 13 December 1865, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 43; and Susan Durant to Lucy, 15 April [1869], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 188.

157. Susan Durant, Osborne, to George Durant, 30 December 1865, R.A. Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 47.

158. Crown Princess of Prussia, Wiesbaden, to Queen Victoria, 10 January 1873, RA Letters of Queen Victoria: Z27/23:29.

159. Crown Princess of Prussia, Potsdam, to Queen Victoria, 11 September 1865, RA Letters of Queen Victoria: Z17/13:88; Queen Victoria, Windsor, to the Crown Princess of Prussia, Potsdam, 1 March 1865; and 11 January 1866, RA Queen Victoria's Letters to the Princess Royal: U32/61, 77.

160. A. T.Camden Pratt, ed., People of the Period (London: Neville Beeman Ltd., 1898), s.v. Robinson, Sir John Charles; and David Robertson, Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 184.

161. A controversy in December 1867 brought about Whistler's removal and Rossetti's resignation.

162. Susan Durant to Emma Wallis, 21 January 1867; 10 March [1867], RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 117, 118.

163. Dean Stanley and Hector Bolitho, eds., Later Letters of Lady Augusta Stanley, 1864-1876 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), 113-14.

164. Susan Durant, Entretat, to George Durant, 1865, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 18; Crown Princess, Potsdam, to Queen Victoria, 24 April 1869, Letters of Queen Victoria: Z23/19:41.

165. Elizabeth Blackwell: Fancourt, They Dared to be Doctors (1965) [This book deals with both female doctors]; Hays, Extraordinary Blackwells (1967); Ross, Child of Destiny (1950); and Wilson, Lone Woman (1970). Elizabeth Garrett: Anderson, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1939); Bell, E. Moberly, Storming the Citadel (1953); and Manton, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1965). Harriet Beecher Stowe: Fields, ed., Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe (1897); and Edward Wagenknecht, Harriet Beecher Stowe the Known and the Unknown (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).

166. David A. Ludley, "Anna Jameson and D.G.Rossetti: His Use of Her Histories," Woman's Art Journal 12, no. 2 (1991/1992): 29.

167. Banks, Becoming a Feminist, 35.

168. "Miss Susan Durant," Queen (22 February 1873): 141. Somewhat confusing is the chronology of the obituary notice, which appeared on 22 February 1873, and the biographical notice, which appeared ten days earlier on 11 February. The biographical notice is referred to in the obituary. The author's initials, C.A.H.C, follow the article but, as yet, I have not been able to identify their owner. One

possible suggestion is that a member of the Cole family, perhaps Henrietta, prepared the notice.

169. "Susan Durant, the Sculptor," Queen (11 January 1873): 27.

CHAPTER FOUR

WRITTEN IN STONE

In "The Sunny Side," the American feminist writer Louisa May Alcott creates a fictional sculptor named Rebecca. The artist, who is likely based on Alcott's friend Harriet Hosmer, presents the visitors to her studio with "her idea of the coming woman," an imposing clay figure who is "both firm and tender." Rebecca declares her woman to be:

> strong-minded, strong-hearted, strong-souled, and strong-bodied; that is why I made her larger than the miserable, pinched-up woman of our day. Strength and beauty must go together. Don't you think these broad shoulders can bear burdens without breaking down, these hands work well, these eyes see clearly, and these lips do something besides simper and gossip?[1]

By virtue of her occupation and independent lifestyle, the sculptor herself is the embodiment of this "new woman." Lest the reader fails to grasp this point, Alcott portrays Rebecca as a tall woman "with a strong face, keen eyes, short, curly hair, and a fine head."[2] Likewise, the monumental work-in-progress is an unequivocal projection of Rebecca's convictions about the rights of women. Arrayed at the statue's feet are a "needle, pen, palette, and broom . . . and a ballot box," indicating the occupational capabilities of the woman and her power to pursue them.[3] The emerging statue gives mute testimony to the vitality of the feminist movement. As the sculptor moulds the clay into the desired form, she contrives to shape public opinion. So compelling is the image of the self-reliant woman, portrayed in flesh and in clay, that the "old fashioned girl" who was brought to visit at the studio begins to realize that women are capable of far more than the superficial life of fashion, accomplishments and gossip to which they are consigned. This capable sculptor could easily be a portrait of Susan Durant.

Alcott's story, written for nineteenth-century American readers, confirms an expectation that a feminist sculptor would use her work as a vehicle for proclaiming her convictions about women's place in society. The artist's handiwork was intended to provide a visual commentary on the status of women, thereby reinforcing the rhetoric and actions of the feminists involved in the various women's campaigns. Moreover, Alcott suggests that members of the public, perhaps women in particular, who looked upon the sculptor's work could apprehend the feminist overtones with which it was infused and be influenced by them.

Susan Durant committed few of her thoughts about women's concerns to paper; her letters offer only two brief sentences affirming the campaign for women's suffrage. Instead, her feminist testimony is written in stone. Like the statue in Alcott's story, certain of Durant's works reveal with silent eloquence the sculptor's support of women's rights. Although she was fully immersed in the aesthetic and stylistic currents of the nineteenth century, the subjects she chose and the manner in which she portrayed them reveal a celebration of the achievements of women and the strength of spirit which women can display in the face of adversity. Implicit in some of her heroic works is a critique of society's unfair treatment of women.

Five of her works will be examined for feminist content. The selected pieces are drawn from two different genres, portraiture and classical figures, and they span a period from 1856 to 1873, representing sixteen years of her twenty-five-year career. They have been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, Durant herself determined the subject-matter for each of the five items. Secondly, there is sufficient information available about the individual sculptures to make an analysis of the subject-matter possible, even where there is no visual record of a work.

In order to appreciate the feminist distinctives of Durant's sculpture, it is necessary to make a brief review of the aesthetic climate of nineteenth-century Britain.

Although sculpture was susceptible to some of the varying aesthetic currents that circulated during the middle of Victoria's reign, it did not undergo as much stylistic transformation as did painting. Two of the more enduring sculptural styles to emerge were a modified Gothic form and a smooth, idealized Neo-classical type; distinguishable from each other more in the variety of clothing represented than in the modelling of the body. With minor alterations, including some concessions to modern dress, these two strains dominated the figure sculpture of the mid-Victorian era, finally giving way to an intensified Realism in the 1880s. Susan Durant's sculpture with its smooth, rounded forms, serene facial features and classical drapery tends toward Neo-Classicism.

In terms of subject-matter, portrait busts dominated the workshops of sculptors. These and funeral monuments were the most consistent source of income during the nineteenth century. Benedict Read isolates three types of portraiture, each of which emphasized different values.[4] The "realistic" variety was most concerned with capturing an accurate likeness of the sitter, even unappealing features were given full attention. By contrast, what Read terms "effectism" presented the dominant features only, softening facial irregularities so as to give the most pleasing overall effect. Lastly, some sculptors preferred to evoke the character of the sitter, emphasizing particular aspects of the bone-structure of the face or rendering a distinctive facial expression. Durant's portrait work does not easily fit into one of these categories. While her medallions and busts bear a clear resemblance to their sitters (often remarked by friends and family), the smooth surface-handling glosses over all but the more noticeable expression lines in the face. Nevertheless, she is able to capture something of the personality of the sitter in the modelling of the bone-structure, mouth and eyes. Her bust of Harriet Beecher Stowe exudes something of the quiet warmth for which the subject was noted, yet it is very smoothly modelled.

Charlotte Yeldham notes an interesting trend in artists' choices of portrait subjects. Beginning in the late 1830s, the female artists in Yeldham's study sought sitters among the "men and women of talent in the various professions" rather than from the ranks of the nobility.[5] The vast majority of Durant's sitters are drawn from the former category of well-known people. See the appendix for a list of her known works.

According to Read, heroic figures had a much smaller market during the nineteenth century but they continued to be the most highly esteemed type of sculpture. Characters drawn from Greco-Roman mythology, the Bible, British history, and the classics of English literature were commissioned more often by civic bodies than private individuals although the wealthiest collectors still bought sculpture to decorate their grand houses. Baron James de Rothschild of Paris commissioned Durant to sculpt a "pastoral subject in marble" in 1857.[6] After the 1850s mythological figures were less frequently chosen by patrons due to what Read claims was an anxiety about the paganism of these subjects which was fuelled by religious uncertainty mid-way through the nineteenth century.[7] He comments that some patrons also had scruples about the detailed nudity required by the myths, although not all classical figures were presented fully or even partially undraped.

Forced by the market to abandon classical nudes, sculptors selected biblical subjects which permitted them to display their skill at depicting the unclothed human form. Adam and Eve were obvious choices, but other, less likely characters were presented half-naked. Read cites Benjamin Spence's Rebecca at the Well (1860, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool) as an example of "the use of subjects from the Bible as excuses for the portrayal of nude or partly nude women, little different from the classical subjects current at the same time."[8]

Although both male and female nudes were abundantly represented in the nineteenth century, there is a qualitative difference in the manner in which they were portrayed. Many of the female nudes affect seductive poses, with drapery slipping from their bodies and heads turned coyly to one side. Others, like the Andromeda figures discussed in Adrienne Auslander Munich's book, are images of female bondage; unclothed women chained to immovable objects, resignedly awaiting a terrible fate.[9] Whether or not they depict scenes from religious literature, Greco-Roman mythology or English literature, such images represent more than a convenient opportunity for the sculptor to display his skill in rendering the human form. Munich asserts that the Andromeda myth reveals an uneasiness about gender roles in the Victorian era. "One discovers envy, fear, curiosity, unease, as well as a conservative effort to classify women as docile Andromedas and men as stalwart Perseuses."[10] Joy Kasson argues that the narrative content of the ideal female figure served a dual purpose in nineteenth-century America. Firstly, it gave a moral or affecting tone to nudes which legitimated their display in public. Secondly, it gave a social message, subtly or blatantly, about the nature and role of women.[11] A very similar agenda lay behind the rendering of ideal nudes in Victorian Britain. In marked contrast with the robust, monumental woman in Alcott's novel, these "marble queens and captives" are shadowy figures which reflect the sexual anxieties of nineteenth-century Britain and America.

Among female artists subjects from classical mythology were far less frequently chosen than scenes from the Bible, English literature and British history. Yeldham offers three reasons for this apparent rejection of Greco-Roman themes up until the 1870s.[12] Most women had a scanty education in antique literature, not many had access to the training in Latin and Greek at grammar schools reserved for boys. Instead they received somewhat fuller training in British history and literature. In addition, many were ill-equipped to render the human figure due to their exclusion from life-classes or, in extreme cases, formal art instruction of any sort. Furthermore, public opinion decreed that grand subjects were not suitable for women largely because it was considered improper for women to depict nude or semi-nude bodies. However, as was mentioned in Chapter Two, female sculptors were well-trained in depicting the human body. Durant's extant female forms are largely draped although the clothing reveals the contours of their bodies.

Whatever the source of subject matter chosen by women artists, scenes depicting women enduring difficult circumstances with dignity and courage overwhelmingly predominated. During the 1840s and 1850s religious subjects which emphasized loyalty and filial devotion abounded in art exhibited by women. Figures like Ruth and Naomi, Hagar and Ishmael were featured. Historical works produced during these decades highlighted the heroism and suffering displayed by women. Mary Queen of Scots was a popular choice. Heroines from English literature were prevalent subjects from the 1840s through the 1860s. Lines derived from a literary work provided the inspiration for affecting scenes which focused on the sadness and suffering experienced by a female protagonist. Interest in the emotional content of such works waned after the 1850s and when concerns over presenting "a code of moral conduct" arose.[13]

Susan Durant's known oeuvre includes fifty-six pieces of sculpture, over half of which have disappeared in the one-hundred twenty years since her death. Most of the extant sculptures are pieces in the Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor Castle. Portraits make up the overwhelming majority of her production. Of the ten figures representing scenes from Greco-Roman mythology and English literature, five are female. The pieces of Durant's work that I have chosen to examine are all of women. Portrait busts of Harriet Beecher Stowe (1857) and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1873) will be dealt with first. Following them, I will discuss three of her classical works: the Faithful Shepherdess (1863), Constance (1866), and Ruth (1869).

Susan Durant's relationships with Harriet Beecher Stowe and Elizabeth Garrett (later Anderson) have been remarked on in Chapter Three of this thesis, and the feminist involvements of these two portrait sitters have been described. The circumstances which led to Durant's preparation of a bust of Stowe have been traced in the renowned author's diaries and letters. However, thus far nothing has been found out about the arrangements involved in modelling a portrait of Elizabeth Garrett during the final year of Durant's life. That a relationship already existed between the doctor and the sculptor is evident from Durant's correspondence with Garrett in the 1860s.

Both Harriet Beecher Stowe and Elizabeth Garrett had tremendous iconic significance for Victorian society. The impact they had on nineteenth century culture, especially women's culture, went far beyond their own occupational achievements and feminist involvements. Stowe, who had authored Uncle Tom's Cabin and lobbied for the abolition of slavery in the United States, was generally revered by the British public for her literary skill and her pro-emancipation activities. She served as a reminder to the people of their broad-mindedness in eradicating the evils of slavery from the British Empire. The Duchess of Sutherland presented her with a gold replica of a slave's shackles on which was engraved the dates of the abolition of slavery in Britain and in all British territories.[14] More importantly, to women in mid-Victorian Britain Stowe was a rallying point for oppressed people--for their own oppressed sex.

As was noted in Chapter One, many women who became feminists in the nineteenth century grew up in households where abolition was preached. Stowe herself recognized the need for political, legal and economic emancipation for women. The timing of Durant's modelling of the bust of Harriet Beecher Stowe in November 1856 is significant: it followed the presentation of Barbara Bodichon's petition for a Married Women's Property Act before Parliament in the spring of 1856. The hoped for reform to the laws of marriage would radically alter the status of married women. Under the existing law, wives were deemed to be the chattels of their husbands much like slaves were the property of their masters. However, the principle of coverture, which denied married women a legal existence apart from their husbands, would be greatly undermined if women were allowed to own and dispose of property as they chose.

The portrait was enthusiastically received by art critics and Stowe's family alike (illustration 5). The Art Journal reviewer declared:

> We have seldom seen a work of more entire excellence; it is a striking likeness of the famous lady--simple and unaffected in style and character--charmingly modelled, and very skilfully wrought.[15]

Mary Beecher Perkins wrote to Isabella Beecher Hooker that the portrait of their sister was "altogether the best, most beautiful likeness of her I have yet seen."[16]

Annie Fields, friend and biographer of the celebrated author, commented on the difficulty portraitists and photographers had in capturing the beauty which infused Stowe's face when she was engrossed in conversation. She concludes that the bust "done by Miss Durant . . . , has preserved this sweet living expression of her countenance."[17]

The marble bust is now located at the Stowe-Day Foundation in Hartford, Connecticut; a plaster cast of the work is on display at Castle Howard in Yorkshire, England. The total height of the work is twenty-four inches including a base measuring four and one-half inches. It is signed and dated 1857 on the lower right shoulder. There is a dreamy quality to the eyes and slightly smiling mouth of the bust, as though Stowe were contemplating a happy future. Her hair is luxuriantly modelled framing brow and cheekbones with "a careless, slow, undulating swell, . . . and the mass is looped up behind in a classical knot, with little pendant curls."[18] A wreath of ivy, signifying that the author's fame will never fade, encircles her head. She is clothed in a classical-style garment edged at the neck with a raised Greek "key" pattern. The shawl which covers her dress is decorated with a cameo of her husband, Calvin Ellis Stowe. The overall effect of the composition is a feeling of timeless quietude.

The subsequent history of the bust is interesting. Thinking that the Duchess of Sutherland would be a likely purchaser, Durant made the portrait in marble of "exquisite quality." However, the sculptor misjudged the Duchess who refused the work, claiming it to be too expensive.[19] Instead, it became the property of the Governor of Bombay where it remained until an American, Dr. Wallace Wood, searched out and purchased the bust. He returned to the United States with his find and "unveiled it at New York University Hall of Fame in 1897." Thereafter the bust changed hands twice, being purchased first by Herbert Turrell from whose estate Maria Miele (Mrs. Anthony) bought the portrait circa 1948. Miele sold it to Katherine Seymour Day, the benefactor of the Stowe-Day Foundation in Hartford, Connecticut where the bust has been kept since 1949.[20]

While Harriet Beecher Stowe was associated with legal emancipation of the oppressed, Elizabeth Garrett represented the liberation of women from the control over their bodies exerted by the male medical establishment. In the name of science, women had suffered agonies at the hands of doctors who did not adequately understand the workings of female anatomy. Frances Power Cobbe was enraged at the ignorance of doctors who perceived normal female functions such as the menstrual cycle and childbirth to be pathological processes. In her article "The Little Health of Ladies" (1878) she exposed the self-serving nature of physicians who encouraged hypochondria in their well-to-do patients. Furthermore, she noted how conveniently the medical community's "discovery" of the detrimental effects of mental exertion upon female health coincided with women's efforts to enter the medical profession.[21]

Elizabeth Garrett was deeply involved in the debate over the physiological impact of education upon women. Her article "Sex and Mind in Education: A Reply" (1874) rebutted Dr. Henry Maudsley's arguments that female students suffered harm to their ability to reproduce as a result of their studies. Garrett reminded the eminent doctor that women from the working classes engaged in much heavier labour than did female students with no diminishment to their childbearing capacities. In her opinion, middle-class women suffered more mental and physical illness from the dissipations of the social season or the tedium of days "filled with make-believe occupations and dreary sham amusements" than they did from studying.[22]

The right to bodily privacy had become a cause célèbre among feminists following the institution of the CD Acts in 1866 and 1869. Women led by Josephine Butler opposed the authority given to government medical officers to detain and examine any woman whom they suspected to be a prostitute.[23] Although Garrett did not join the campaign to repeal the CD Acts, for reasons stated in Chapter Three of this thesis, by entering the medical profession and concentrating her practice on women and children exclusively, she initiated an important step in the struggle of women to regain control over their own bodies.

The event which probably occasioned Durant's production of the portrait bust was Garrett's establishment of the New Hospital for Women (later renamed the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital) in 1872.[24] Durant did not live to see the portrait on display at the Royal Academy in the spring of 1873. Little trace remains of this important example of Durant's work and its location is currently unknown.

The first of Durant's classical figures that I will discuss is the Faithful Shepherdess which was commissioned by the Corporation of the City of London for the Mansion House in 1861. The Shepherdess was one of seventeen sculptures chosen to "illustrate the creations of the poets of Great Britain."[25] Fourteen sculptors were given full freedom to determine which subject(s) they would portray as long as they fulfilled this rather broad requirement.[26] Durant chose to illustrate a scene from John Fletcher's play The Faithful Shepherdess (1610). Based on a Greek pastoral novel, The Story of Daphnis and Chloe by Longus (3rd or 4th century, A.D.), Fletcher's work is a morality play which contrasts licentious behaviour with fidelity.

In the play, a shepherd called Perigot and a shepherdess named Amoret, pledge themselves to each other, promising to formally declare their betrothal at a magic fountain after their day's work. As a sign of his devotion, Perigot gives Amoret a ring and a bracelet which she wears. In the course of the day another shepherdess, Amarillis, meets up with Perigot and declares her love for him. But he, being chaste and faithful to Amoret refuses her seductive advances. Undaunted, Amarillis contrives through magical means to disguise herself as Amoret and waylay Perigot, who is horrified by her unchaste behaviour towards him. Intent upon killing her for her wantonness Perigot chases the imposter into the woods where she evades his pursuit moments before the arrival of the true Amoret. Perigot seizes the bewildered Amoret and plunges his lance into her breast, leaving her to die. Realizing that she has caused great harm, Amarillis confronts Perigot and confesses her ruse. Heartsick, Perigot goes off by himself to contemplate suicide. However, by magical means Amoret's wound is healed and she seeks out her beloved. Believing that the woman he sees is Amarillis in disguise once again, Perigot rises to challenge her. Anxious to confirm her true identity and prove her fidelity Amoret points to the tokens of Perigot's love for her saying:

> look and see the Ring thou gavest me, and about my wrist that curious bracelet thou thy self didst twist from those fair Tresses: knowest thou Amoret, hath not some newer love forc'd thee forget thy ancient faith?[27]

This is the moment of the play that Durant chose to express in her statue of the Faithful Shepherdess. Amoret chides an overwrought Perigot for his low esteem of her honour and calls his fidelity into question, implying that by his mistrust Perigot has betrayed his beloved. Still unconvinced that this is the true Amoret, Perigot wounds her once more, spilling her blood on his hand. When he discovers that the blood will not wash away he realizes that he has mistaken innocence for guilt. All is set right and the play ends with faithfulness triumphing over deceit and wantonness.

The sculpture of the Faithful Shepherdess is located in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House in London. Made of Cararra marble the figure and base together stand seven feet high; the work is mounted on a marble plinth inscribed with the name of the work, its sculptor, and the date 1863. Durant's Shepherdess is appropriately classical in form and clothing. The voluminous drapery of her robe falls in finely textured folds exposing one shoulder and breast. Her oval face registers a calm confidence born of innocence; cradled by her left arm, the crook fashioned for her by Perigot leans on a diagonal from her left shoulder to her right foot drawing the viewer's eyes to her gesturing hands.

The hands have been damaged and restored repeatedly since Durant first modelled them. Before being installed in its appointed niche at the Egyptian Hall, the figure was shown at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1863 where one of the fingers was broken off.[28] In a photograph of the Faithful Shepherdess (illustration 6) repair work on all of the fingers of the right hand and the index finger of the left is visible. During the middle 1950s, when this picture was taken, the configuration of the statue's hands agreed with the phrase "look and see the Ring thou gavest me" which was quoted in the Royal Academy Exhibition catalogue entry on Durant's pastoral figure. With her left forefinger the Shepherdess points to a (now missing) ring on the fourth finger of her outstretched right hand.

A subsequent photograph (c. 1986, not shown) reveals a right hand missing all but the fifth finger and a left hand on which all of the fingers but the thumb are improbably large and awkwardly curved as though loosely holding an object.

During the winter of 1992-93 the statue was sent once again for cleaning and repairs. I had the opportunity of viewing the figure in the final stages of restoration and was dismayed to find that the fingers of both hands, though beautifully modelled, had been shaped as though to grasp a cord. The reasoning behind this presentation was that the bracelet on the right wrist looked like a portion of a presumably damaged rope. In light of the quotation from the play this is surely an accidental misrepresentation of Durant's original work. It is unlikely that the recent restoration work has been altered to reflect accurately the subject chosen by Durant.

Susan Durant's intention to portray the Faithful Shepherdess vigorously protesting her fidelity has been erased by a series of accidents and misunderstandings. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this history of reconstruction is the shift in characterization undergone by the Shepherdess. In Durant's original composition, she was an active moral agent, sure of her righteousness. In the most recent restoration and its attendant interpretation, the Shepherdess is at best an attractive, meaningless pastoral figure; and at worst a passive woman bound with a rope like a slave. This latter image is reminiscent of Harriet Hosmer's Zenobia (illustration 7) without the dignified defiance which appears in the face of the captive Queen of Palmyra.

The second of Durant's ideal figures which I will examine is Constance, the central character in the "Man of Lawe's Tale" from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (1386-1400). As her name suggests, Constance represents tenacity in the face of adversity. Cesare Ripa's Iconologia (1636), a compendium of emblems and personifications for the use of artists, describes the image of Constancy as "armed with righteousness and unshakable faith in her beliefs."[29]

The pilgrims on the road to Canterbury are told the story of Constance, the daughter of a Christian Roman emperor, renowned for her beauty, virtue and steadfastness. The sultan of Syria hears of her charms and vows to "be christened and baptized" in order to "be hers."[30] The emperor agrees to the sultan's offer of marriage which involves the conversion of all the Syrian subjects to the Christian faith. However, following the wedding the sultan's mother executes all those who have abandoned Islam. Still alive, Constance is bundled into a rudderless boat and set adrift on the Mediterranean Sea. Despite the apparent hopelessness of her circumstances she reaffirms her faith in Christ and awaits deliverance. Eventually her boat runs aground near the castle of a pagan Northumbrian lord. The inhabitants take her in, are impressed by her virtue and beauty, and eventually embrace her faith. The lord of the castle makes her his wife and, in time, a son is born to them. Once again, she is consigned to the rudderless boat by a mother-in-law opposed to the Christian religion. She and her helpless child drift for many years. However, Constance's unshakable faith is finally rewarded when she blows up onto the shores of Italy and is rescued. The story concludes happily with a reunion of Constance and her husband.

Like the shepherdess who endures great suffering despite her innocence, Constance is another victim of injustice. In the face of repeated adversity she retains her faith and her dignity. Durant's Constance embodies a quotation from the Tale:

> her little child lay weeping on her arm; and, kneeling tenderly to him she said, "Hush little son, I will do you no harm."[31]

Constance's tender care for the helpless child is a deliberate evocation of Christ's concern for the well-being of believers. The portion of the narrative from which this quote is drawn invites readers to ponder the dialectic between strength and weakness, a theme which recurs throughout the New Testament. In the stanza immediately preceding the reference to the weeping child, Constance reiterates her faith in Christ:

> As strong as He has been, so is He now,
> In Him I trust, and in His mother dear,
> My sail and rudder, and my guiding star.[32]

Her statement is reminiscent of the Apostle Paul's declaration "I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. . . . ; for when I am weak, then I am strong."[33] The reader is also reminded of Paul's testimony "Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea."[34] Similarly, though Constance is weak, her faith is strong, ultimately enabling her to triumph over apparently insurmountable obstacles. For Victorian women who were struggling to gain legal, educational and occupational rights, Constance would have been a potent symbol of the value of perseverance.

The sculpture was given a mixed reception by reviewers (illustration 8). The Art Journal commented that "Miss Durant deserves some praise for a group taken from the Canterbury Tales."[35] However, the critic from the Times was quite reserved in his appraisal of the piece, noting it to be

> large in style, and singularly free from anything effeminate in conception or treatment; indeed, it seems rather to err by deficiency than excess of the quality of tenderness which we should have expected in a woman's rendering of the subject.[36]

This sort of offhand dismissal of a woman's art was unfortunately common during the nineteenth century. In a review of the first exhibition of the Society of Female Artists, the Art Journal reporter noted the dilemma faced by women artists. When they produced work which was pretty but not profound (floral still-lifes for example) they were criticized for being too "feminine." However, if they chose to portray bolder subjects or refrained from over-sentimental presentations their work was branded "unfeminine."[37] Durant's statue was intended to express resolve, not pathos.

Constance was shown at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1866, together with portrait medallions of Queen Victoria and six of her children, also by Durant. The work has not been traced since, but I believe I may have found the missing Constance.

My research suggests that the group of Constance and her little child bears an interesting relationship to the royal family; in fact it appears very likely that the child in the group is a portrait of Prince Sigismund, the son of Queen Victoria's daughter the Crown Princess of Prussia.

In September of 1865 Susan Durant was in Potsdam modelling the portrait of the Crown Princess of Prussia, in connection with the commission to decorate the Albert Memorial Chapel. After the profile was completed, the Crown Princess employed Durant to do other pieces including a portrait of the one-year-old Sigismund.

Durant worked on this piece at Windsor Castle during the Crown Princess's visit with her mother the Queen in November 1865. Modelling the likeness of an extremely active toddler proved to be quite a challenge for Durant who was greatly relieved when Sigismund fell asleep in the arms of his nurse.[38] She took advantage of the moment and prepared a sketch of the baby and the nurse together which she intended to sculpt independently of the commissioned portrait. Durant's diary relates that the Crown Princess was very pleased with the portrait bust and the sketch of the nurse and baby: "She says that I am to tell everyone that the baby in my group of mother and child is modelled from her boy."[39] Sadly, Sigismund died in June of 1866, less than a year after sitting for his portrait. Durant makes one final mention of him in a letter from the Neue Palais in Potsdam written in April of 1869. There she states that her sculpture of Sigismund is on his tomb at Friedenskirche in Potsdam.[40]

No record of a work by Susan Durant can be found in the archives of Sanssouci Castle in Potsdam. However, the funeral monument to Prince Sigismund at Sanssouci, which is currently attributed to the nineteenth-century German sculptor Reinhold Begas, displays certain features which accord strongly with documentation on Durant's portraits of the little prince. Firstly, the mausoleum is decorated with both the winged woman holding a slumbering Sigismund and an identical bust of the boy at the base of the statue pedestal. The two portraits, one a bust and the other a component of a group, directly correlate with the pieces mentioned in the Durant papers. Secondly, the child sleeping on the woman's arm corresponds well with both the quotation from Chaucer and with Durant's comment that Sigismund was asleep while she worked. Moreover, the child on the funeral monument has the size and bodily proportions of a one-year-old, the age of Sigismund when Durant modelled him. Thirdly, the funeral monument displays some discordant elements. The wings appear to be on a different plane than the woman's shoulders, giving the body an oddly rotated look. This suggests that they were a later addition to the work which would not easily accommodate wings. In addition, the decorative motif of scrolls and vegetation on the pedestal supporting the statue is at odds with the spare classicism of the woman and child. Finally, the exhibition of Durant's Constance (1866) fits with the chronology of her work on the portrait of Sigismund (1865). On the basis of this evidence, I wish to suggest that Susan Durant's statue of Constance is in fact the figure surmounting the mausoleum of Sigismund at Sanssouci until now wrongly attributed to Begas.[41]

The last of Durant's heroic female sculptures that I will examine is a bust of Ruth which was exhibited in the Royal Academy show of 1869. The biblical character of Ruth fascinated people in Victorian Britain. According to Yeldham's research she was the frequent subject of works by female artists, especially during the 1840s. Otto and Jenny (Lind) Goldschmidt presented a musical version of the story of Ruth in the late 1860s. Catherine Winkworth, a feminist friend of Jenny Lind described the public reception of the musical presentation in a letter of 6 December 1869: "The Times never noticed it; the Pall Mall was severe; the Daily News moderate but cold; all the other papers praised [sic] and there were [sic] no end of private letters;"[42] Possibly the most arresting presentation of Ruth in the nineteenth century was made in a novel by Elizabeth Gaskell.

When Gaskell's Ruth was published in 1852 it generated considerable controversy. Loosely based on the Old Testament figure, the novel expressed a radical social agenda, exposing the double standard of morality and the wrongful stigma attached to illegitimacy. The book's central character is a young woman of good morals who ekes out a meagre but honest living as a sempstress. She falls prey to a profligate young man who seduces her, ruining her good name and leaving her to bear an illegitimate child. Throughout the novel, Gaskell contrasts Ruth's essential purity of heart with her seducer's self-indulgent nature making the point that the man was the truly guilty party in the affair.

Feminists such as Josephine Butler, Anna Jameson and Elizabeth Barrett Browning hailed Gaskell's novel as a welcome treatment of an ill which beset British society and undermined the lives of countless women.[43] Butler's later work on the campaign to repeal the CD Acts was similarly aimed at correcting the false assumption that prostitutes were wicked women who deserved to be hounded by the law while the men who exploited them should be left alone. The words of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Contagious Diseases Acts reflect the double standard: "With the one sex the offence is committed as a matter of gain; with the other it is an irregular indulgence of a natural impulse."[44]

In the biblical account, Ruth is noteworthy for her loyalty to her widowed mother-in-law, Naomi. Following the death of Ruth's husband, Naomi determines to leave the land of Moab and return to her native Judah in search of relatives who might offer her shelter. Although a Moabitess, Ruth refuses to abandon Naomi declaring "where you go I will go . . . ; your people shall be my people."[45] All of Ruth's actions in the narrative are undertaken out of a concern to provide for Naomi. Destitute and far away from home Ruth agrees to Naomi's suggestion to offer herself to Boaz, a kinsman and wealthy landowner who has permitted her to glean grain from his fields. Boaz agrees to honour his levirate obligation, marries her and provides both women with a home. The novel and the biblical account present a common message: when virtuous women are placed in circumstances of extreme economic need they take desperate measures in order to survive. The Ruth of the Old Testament has an additional appeal to feminists. She devoted her energies to obtaining a secure place in society for Naomi. Those who were campaigning for women's rights during the nineteenth century would have related well to Ruth's solidarity with Naomi.

Through Gaskell's novel, Ruth became a social icon which influenced all subsequent renderings of the subject. When Susan Durant's bust of Ruth was displayed at the Royal Academy it attracted considerable attention. According to the Art Journal, the work "received much favourable notice [and is] . . . to be cast in bronze by the famous house of Barbidienne [sic], of Paris, who have secured the right of reproduction, both life-size and of smaller dimensions."[46] Austin Henry Layard's comment to Durant that he had "particularly noticed and admired" the piece accords with the evaluation of the reviewers.[47]

The timing of Durant's production of this piece is significant. It was during 1869 that the last of the CD Acts was promulgated, prompting Elizabeth Wolstenholme to establish the Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in December. However, feminist antagonism to these Acts had been building since the initial legislation in 1862. It is altogether probable that Durant's bust of Ruth was conceived as a protest against the harassment of women who were assumed to be prostitutes. Drawing upon both the biblical material and the plot of the novel, Durant's sculpture would have conveyed a powerful message; if women pulled together they could effectively challenge the double standard of morality which had been blatantly upheld by the CD Acts. The plight of "fallen women" would have been particularly poignant to Durant in 1869, for in October of that year she became an unwed mother. Although she ultimately managed to keep the birth of her son secret, she would have spent many anxious moments fearing for her reputation and her career during the pregnancy.

Each of the five pieces of sculpture by Durant that have been examined in this chapter conveys a recognizably feminist message. The portrait busts of Harriet

Beecher Stowe and Elizabeth Garrett celebrated the individual achievements of the sitters and marked five important steps in the women's rights struggle during the nineteenth century: the beginning of the campaign for married women's property rights, the initial victory in women's fight to retain control over their own bodies, the right to education, to the vote, and to a profession. Durant's three heroic female figures, The Faithful Shepherdess, Constance and Ruth were all women with whom Victorian feminists could identify. All three of them were victimized because of their sexuality; as single mothers both Ruth and Constance raised the issue of "fallen womanhood" and its associations with the double standard of morality. Though faced with extreme adversity all three exhibited remarkable self-control and patience, never giving in to despair despite the apparent hopelessness of their individual situations. Such noble figures encouraged women to be proud of the capabilities of their gender at a time when the majority of women lived anonymous lives under the authority of husbands and fathers. Moreover, legendary heroines provided women with inspiring role-models during the pioneering stages of the feminist movement.

Three of Durant's works, the two portraits and the bust of Ruth, had a distinctly personal significance for the sculptor. Both Harriet Beecher Stowe and Elizabeth Garrett were known to Durant. Moreover, the particular causes they supported, suffrage and professional opportunities for women, were dear to her heart. Durant's experience of a pregnancy out of wed-lock and concern for the well-being of her illegitimate child led her to identify with the figure of Ruth. These five works from her oeuvre attest to a serious concern for the rights of women. Susan Durant used the visual language of art to express her views; her feminist convictions are written in stone.

Notes

1. Alcott, "The Sunny Side," in Alternative Alcott, ed. Showalter, 230.

2. Ibid., 229.

3. Ibid., 231.

4. Read, Victorian Sculpture,173-77.

5. Yeldham, Nineteenth-Century Artists, 1:153.

6. "Mrs. Beecher Stowe"--Bust in Marble," Illustrated London News 869 (18 July 1857): 53-4.

7. Read, Victorian Sculpture, 203.

8. Ibid., 203, 206.

9. Adrienne Auslander Munich, Andromeda's Chains: Gender and Interpretation in Victorian Literature and Art (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

10. Ibid., 3.

11. Joy S. Kasson, Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 45.

12. Yeldham, Nineteenth-Century Women Artists, 117-18. My summary of the subject matter selected by female artists draws heavily on Yeldham's extensive research on women artists in nineteenth-century Britain.

13. Ibid., 134.

14. Fields, ed., Life and Letters of Stowe, 196.

15. Art Journal (London: 1857): 176.

16. Mary Beecher Perkins to Isabella Beecher Hooker, 12-16 November [1856], Transcription of letter, Library, Stowe-Day Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut, AC.63.378.

17. Fields, ed., Life and Letters of Stowe, 206-07.

18. "Mrs. Beecher Stowe," Illustrated London News (18 July 1857): 53-4.

19. Isabella Beecher Hooker, Hartford, to Alice Hooker Day, 4 May 1892, Stowe-Day Foundation, AC.63.378.

20. The information about the provenance of the bust is drawn from a letter written by Renée Tribert Williams, Curator, Stowe-Day Foundation, 29 January 1993, in response to my query about the sculpture's whereabouts.

21. Cobbe's article is summarized in Caine, Victorian Feminists, 142-43.

22. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, "Sex and Mind in Education: A Reply," Fortnightly Review (May 1874), in Strong-Minded Women, ed. Murray, 224.

23. Josephine Butler, "The Ladies' Appeal and Protest Against the Contagious Diseases Acts," The Shield (14 March 1870), in Strong-Minded Women, ed. Murray, 428-32.

24. Murray, ed., Strong-Minded Women, 223.

25. A search committee selected fifteen artists to submit statuettes for evaluation. On 21 March 1861 five of the fifteen were chosen to execute their sketches for the decoration of the Mansion House. P.E.Jones, Typescript summary of the sculpture at the Mansion House, April 1951, Guildhall Art Gallery, Corporation of London.

26. "Minor Topics of the Month," Art Journal (1856), 126.

27. John Fletcher, The Faithful Shepherdess (London: G.Bedell and T.Collins, 5th ed., 1665), 4.1, p. 48.

28. P. E.Jones, "Statuary at the Mansion House," April 1951, Typescript digest of relevant information in the minutes of the General Purposes Committee and the Court of Common Council, Guildhall Art Gallery, Corporation of London; and "Minutes of Council," 10 July 1863, Royal Academy Council and Committee of Arrangement, Royal Academy of Arts, London.

29. Cesare Ripa, Baroque and Rococo Pictorial Imagery, trans. Edward A. Maser (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), s.v. Constancy.

30. Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, intro. and trans. David Wright (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 119.

31. Ibid., 137.

32. Ibid.

33. 2 Cor. 12:9-10 RSV (Revised Standard Version).

34. 2 Cor. 11:25 RSV (Revised Standard Version).

35. Art Journal (1866): 171.

36. Times (London, 22 May 1866): 12.

37. Art Journal (1857): 215.

38. Susan Durant, Short diary, November 1865, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 37.

39. Ibid., 12.

40. Susan Durant, Potsdam, to George Durant, 27 April 1869, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/212 D/7.

41. More work needs to be done on the attribution of this work. The photograph and information about the funeral monument arrived in my mailbox late in the writing of this thesis. Consequently, I was neither able to make a full search of the oeuvre of Begas nor to travel to Potsdam to see the monument.

42. Margaret J. Shaen, ed., Memorials of Two Sisters, Susanna and Catherine Winkworth (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1908), 274.

43. Rubenius, The Woman Question in Mrs. Gaskell, 46; and Caine, Victorian Feminists, 30.

44. Report of the Commission on the Contagious Diseases Acts (1871) quoted in Murray, ed., Strong-Minded Women, 426.

45. Ruth 1:16.

46. Art Journal (1870): 94.

47. Susan Durant, Paris, to George Durant, 13 May 1869, RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 169.

CONCLUSION

At the outset of this thesis I undertook the task of demonstrating that the Victorian sculptor Susan Durant was a feminist and that similar feminist convictions were held by a significant segment of the female art community in nineteenth-century Britain.

The first chapter is devoted to a summary of current research on the nature of the Victorian feminist community so as to provide a context within which to examine the actions of Susan Durant and female artists as a group. Studies by Philippa Levine and Olive Banks indicate that Victorian feminism was characterized by an intricate web of women who related to one another across the traditional boundaries of politics, religion and occupation. These networks that were so remarkable for their integration formed the infrastructure for the various women's rights campaigns which were promulgated during the course of the nineteenth century. Many of the campaigns were also loosely affiliated with one another, sharing members in common. The campaigns for access to the professions and to higher education were intimately related; any advance made by either of these groups directly affected the other. Some issue groups distanced themselves from the more controversial feminist causes for strategic reasons.

The profile of Victorian feminists by Olive Banks indicates a series of factors which predisposed women to become women's rights activists. These factors include an unconventional upbringing, familial involvement with radical politics, childhood exposure to abolition activities, and an evangelical or non-conformist religious background.

To these predisposing factors I have added a series of inhibiting circumstances which should be taken into consideration when evaluating a given woman's commitment to feminism. Such things as family demands, concerns about reputation, potential financial repercussions, and occupational limitations could influence the extent to which a woman participated in the more visible manifestations of feminism. The limits imposed by careers in the visual and performing arts have been emphasized. The chapter concludes that Victorian feminism was comprised of a diversity of causes and people all of which were concerned with improving the status of women.

In Chapter Two an examination of the Victorian women's art movement was made. The backgrounds of individual participants in this movement were reviewed and compared with the profile of Victorian feminists which was presented in the first chapter. Substantial similarities were found between the female artists who were sampled and the feminists surveyed in Banks and Levine. Both groups were largely drawn from the middle class and, like the feminists, a significant portion of the artists came from families with radical political leanings. Many of the sculptors and painters in this study circulated in the social circles of women who were prominent in the Victorian feminist movement. For example, both Susan Durant and the

American sculptor Harriet Hosmer were friends of feminists Harriet Beecher Stowe and Anna Jameson.

The Society of Female Artists to which many of the female artists belonged, was shown to be an important link with the larger feminist community. The connection between this exhibiting society and the Langham Place Circle suggests that the women's art movement was in the forefront of initiatives to promote women's access to the professions. On the basis of this evidence I have concluded that the women's art movement was one of the various movements which together comprised Victorian feminism.

The third chapter presents a detailed analysis of the friends and group affiliations of Susan Durant. The lives of people who knew Durant were examined for evidence of feminist sympathies. Distinct patterns in the company she kept were discovered. A significant portion of her friends were political radicals, many of whom championed women's causes in their capacities as Members of Parliament. An equally large contingent were avowed feminists who concerned themselves with issues of women's education, employment, and suffrage. A striking number of Durant's friends had connections with each other independent of their relationship with her, forming a network remarkably similar to those seen in the larger feminist community.

The groups with which Durant was affiliated also contained individuals from her social circle. One group, the Society of Female Artists had distinctly feminist origins; the other group was a professional club through which she furthered her career opportunities.

Susan Durant was surrounded by feminists and people who were sympathetic to the advancement of women. Her social circle reflected in microcosm the relationships and group affiliations which characterized both the women's art movement and Victorian feminism. On the basis of this evidence together with the testimony of an unnamed eulogist, I have suggested that Susan Durant was indeed a feminist.

The analysis of a selection of her works in Chapter Four corroborates this view. Durant chose to sculpt portraits of two women, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Elizabeth Garrett, who were known for their involvement in women's rights causes. Moreover, the timing of her production of these pieces corresponded directly with the launch of two important initiatives for the advancement of women: the presentation of the petition for a married women's property act in Parliament and the opening of the New Hospital for Women in London.

The three figures from literature that Durant sculpted were all women of heroic virtue who had suffered for their sexuality. One, the figure of Ruth, was probably intended as a silent expression of Durant's own anxieties about becoming an unwed mother. It also amounted to a mute condemnation of the double standard of morality which was exemplified in the CD Acts, the last of which was promulgated within six months of the exhibition of the sculpture. The figures of Constance and the Faithful Shepherdess would have been seen as exemplars of perseverance by women struggling to overcome monumental obstacles to their causes.

Like many other members of the women's art movement of the nineteenth century, Susan Durant held feminist convictions. Whether her feminism predisposed her to choose a non-traditional occupation, or whether it developed as a consequence of grappling with the obstacles erected against female artists is unimportant. With the support of her network of feminist and radical friends she was enabled to pursue her career as a sculptor and, belatedly, leave her mark on history.

APPENDIX

List of Known Works by Susan Durant

Unless otherwise stated the medium, dimensions, and location of the sculptures are unknown. Abbreviations are as follows: Royal Academy (RA); British Institution (BI); Society of Female Artists (SFA).

1. Portraits

1847. Miss Allwood (RA 1377). Bust.

Don Adolfo Bayo (RA 1418). Bust.

1848. Lidwell Heathom, Esq. (RA 1423). Bust.

1850. Cavaliere Sebastiano Fuezi (RA 1364).

1851. Daniel Whittle Harvey, Esq. (RA 1337). Bust.

1852. Matthew Begbie, Esq. (RA 1359). Medallion.

1853. Self portrait (RA 1449). Marble bust.

1856. Mr. Mechi (RA 1311). Marble bust.

1857. Harriet Beecher Stowe (RA 1353). Marble bust, 24 inches high. Signed and dated below right shoulder. Stowe-Day Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut. Plaster original. Castle Howard, Yorkshire.

1858. Lady Killeen (RA 1315). Marble.

H.H. Toussoun Pasha (SFA). Plaster bust. Englishwoman's Journal 1, no.3 (1 May 1858): 206.

1859. Harvey Brabazon Combe, son of B.H.Combe, Esq. (RA 1350). Marble.

1860. John Percy, Esq., M.D., F.R.S. (RA 981).

Matthew Combe, Esq., LL.D. (RA 1055). Marble.

1863. George Grote, Esq. (RA 1135). Marble medallion, 22 1/2 inches high, 17 2/3 inches wide. College Art Collections, University College London.

1864. Baron Henri de Triqueti (RA 890).

1866. H.M. Queen Victoria (RA 875). Marble medallion. Signed and dated. Royal Collection, Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor Castle. Plaster. Osborne House, Isle of Wight.

H.R.H. Albert, the Prince Consort. Marble medallion. Signed and dated. Royal Collection, Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor. Plaster. Osborne House. Gunnis, Dictionary of British Sculptors, s.v. Durant, Susan.

H.R.H. Prince Leopold (RA 876). Marble medallion. Signed on underside of shoulder. Albert Memorial Chapel. Plaster. Osborne House.

H.R.H. Princess Louise (RA 877). Marble medallion. Signed on underside of shoulder. Albert Memorial Chapel. Plaster. Osborne House.

H.R.H. the Crown Princess of Prussia (Princess Victoria) (RA 890). Marble medallion. Signed on underside of shoulder. Albert Memorial Chapel. Plaster. Osborne House.

H.R.H. Prince Alfred (RA 891). Marble medallion. Albert Memorial Chapel. Plaster. Osborne House.

H.R.H. Princess Beatrice (RA 892). Marble medallion. Albert Memorial Chapel. Plaster. Osborne House.

H.R.H. Princess Helena (RA 893). Marble medallion. Signed on underside of shoulder. Albert Memorial Chapel. Plaster. Osborne House.

Five grandchildren (names not given) of H.M. Queen Victoria. Medallions.

RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 C/7.

Col. Sir C.B. Phipps, K.C.B. Marble bust. RA Queen Victoria's Journal: 28 February 1866.

Sir Arthur Helps. Bust. RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 74.

Howard Blackwell. Medallion. RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 69.

1867. Woronzow Greig, Esq., clerk of the peace for Surrey (RA 1028). Marble bust, posthumous.

H.R.H. Prince Sigismund (RA 1111). Marble bust. Suggested location: Sanssouci Castle, Potsdam.

Mme Delessert, daughter of Henri de Triqueti. Medallion. RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 106.

King Leopold of Belgium. Marble funeral monument. Esher Parish Church, Surrey. La Grande Encyclopédie, s.v. Durant, Susan.

1868. H.R.H. Princess Louis of Hesse (Princess Alice) (RA 927). Marble medallion. Signed on underside of shoulder. Albert Memorial Chapel. Plaster. Osborne House.

H.R.H. the Princess of Wales (RA 928). Marble medallion. Signed and dated in background beside the back of the head. Albert Memorial Chapel. Plaster. Osborne House.

Miss Ritchie (RA 997). Marble.

1869. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (RA 1143). Marble medallion. Signed on underside of shoulder. Albert Memorial Chapel. Plaster. Osborne House.

Lily and Arthur Brooking (RA 1185). Marble.

1871. Nina Lehmann. Marble bust with hardstone tarsia, 30 inches high, 23 3/8 inches wide. Private collection, England. Agnew's, Master Drawings and Sculpture, November-December 1989, no. 81.

1872. H.M. Queen Victoria (RA 1517). Marble bust. Destroyed during war of 1939-1945.

1873. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (RA 1577). Marble bust.

2. Ideal Subjects

1849. A lady (RA 1260). Bust.

1850. The Chief Mourner (RA 1346; also shown at Great Exhibition 1851). Statue of a girl.

1851. Belisarius (Great Exhibition). Gunnis, Dictionary of British Sculptors, s.v. Durant, Susan.

1856. Robin Hood (RA 1271; also shown at Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857, and SFA 555, 1858). Marble statue.

1858. The Negligent Watchboy of the Vineyard Catching Locusts (RA 1169; also shown at BI 648, 1860). Marble statue.

Warwick, the King Maker (SFA 555). Model. "Society of Female Artists," Art Journal (1858): 143-44.

1863. The Faithful Shepherdess (RA 1025). Marble statue, 84 inches high. Egyptian Hall, Mansion House, London.

Thetis (SFA). Three marble bas-reliefs. La Grande Encyclopédie, s.v. Durant, Susan.

1865. Homer. Stone medallion. Mounted above the entrance door of The Ridgeway, Shere, Surrey, home of Mrs. Alicia Russell. RA Vic. Add. Mss. X/2 5.

1866. Constance (RA 855). Marble. Suggested location: Sanssouci Castle, Potsdam.

1869. Ruth (RA 1289). Marble bust.

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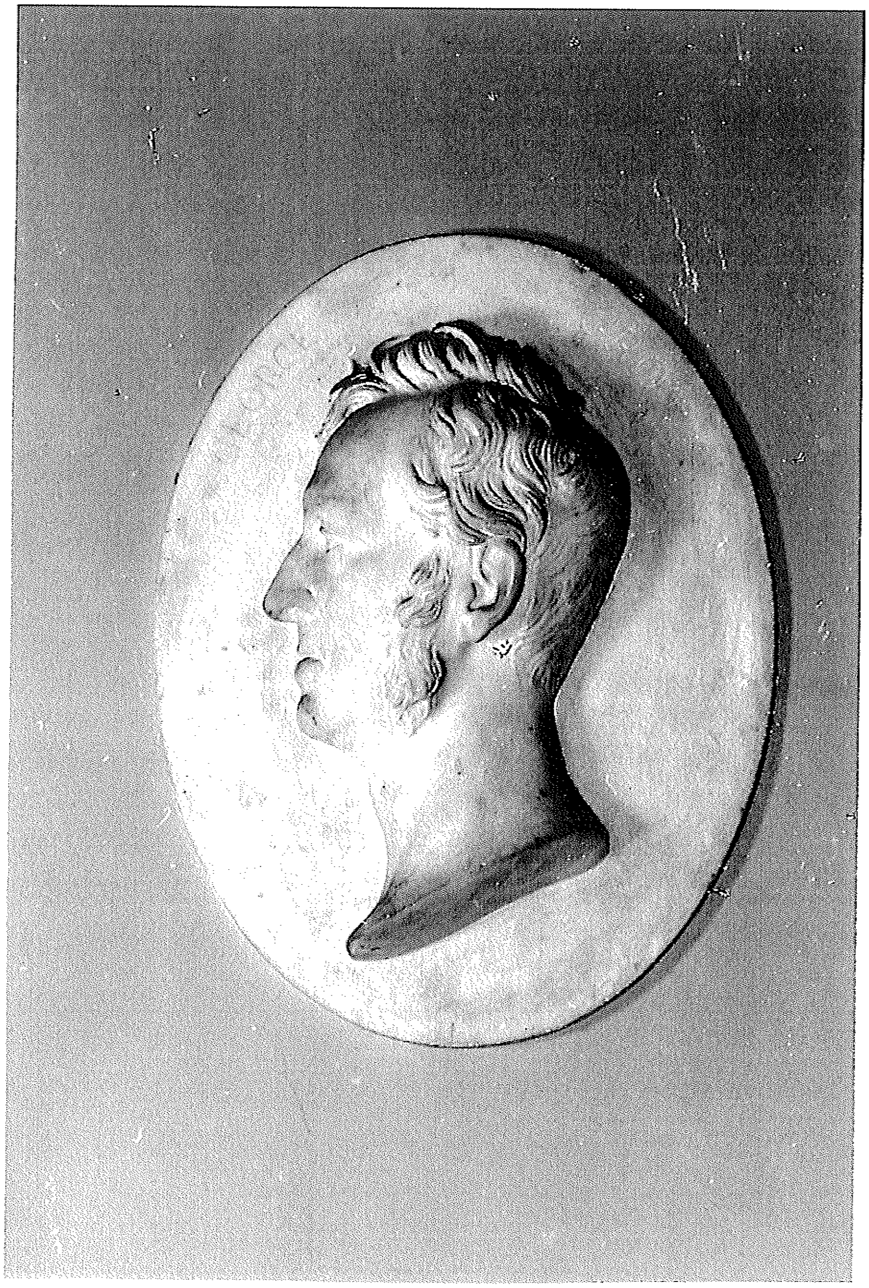
ILLUSTRATIONS



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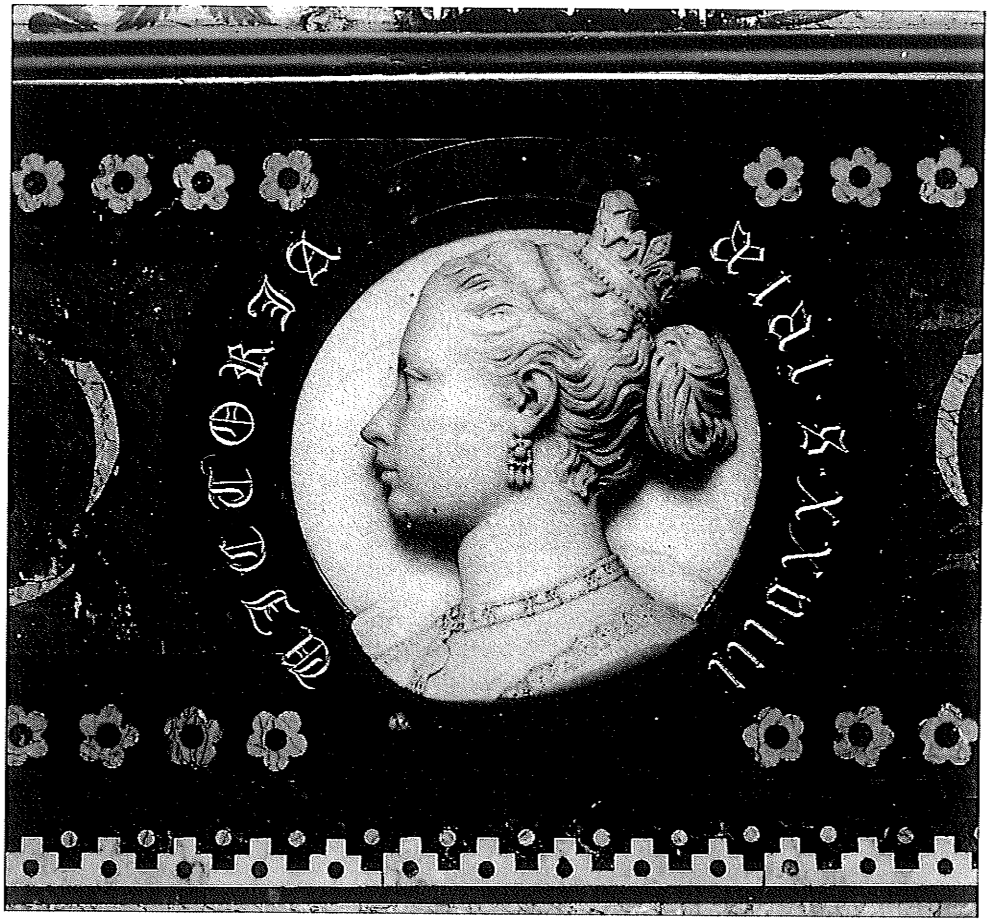

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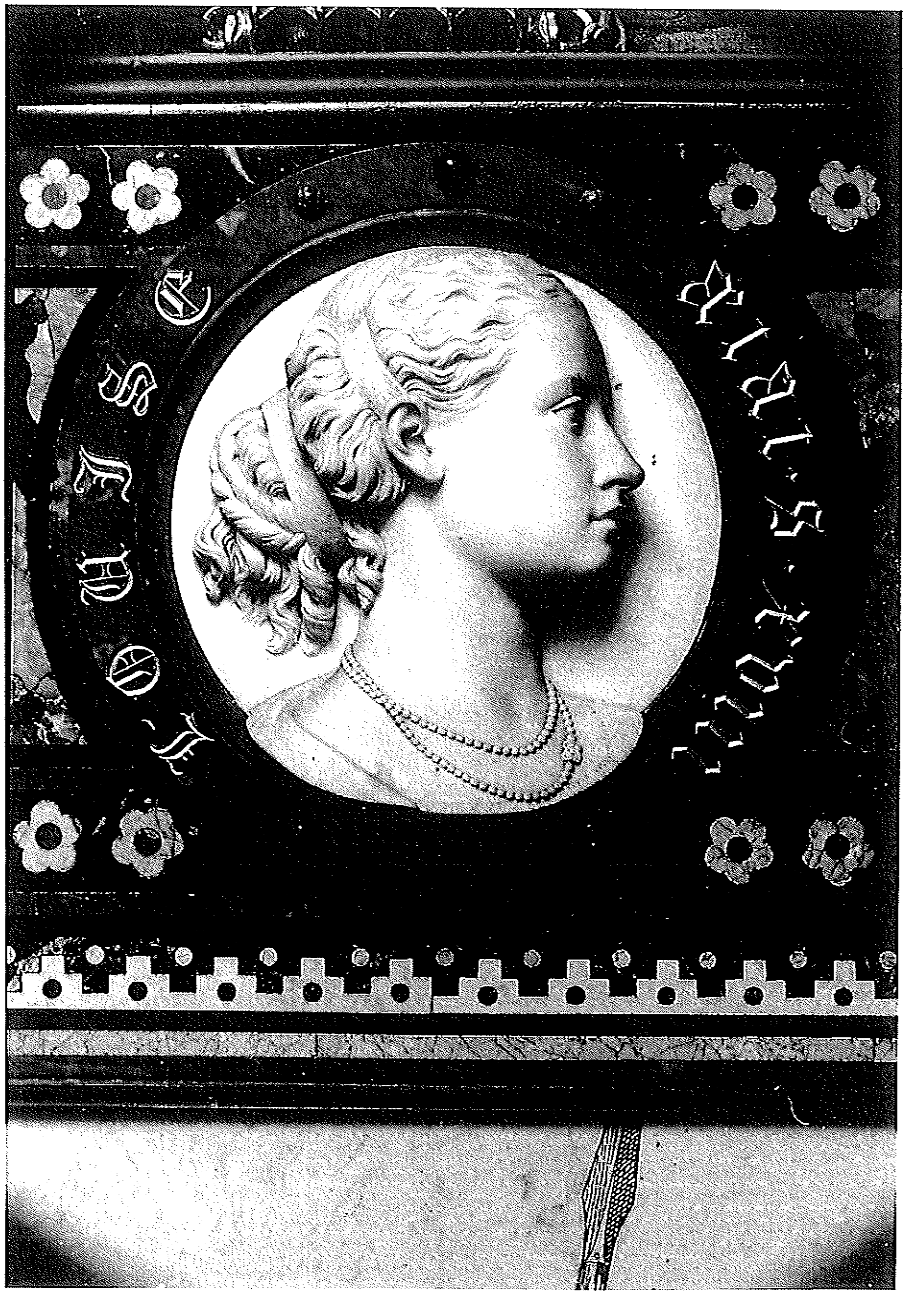

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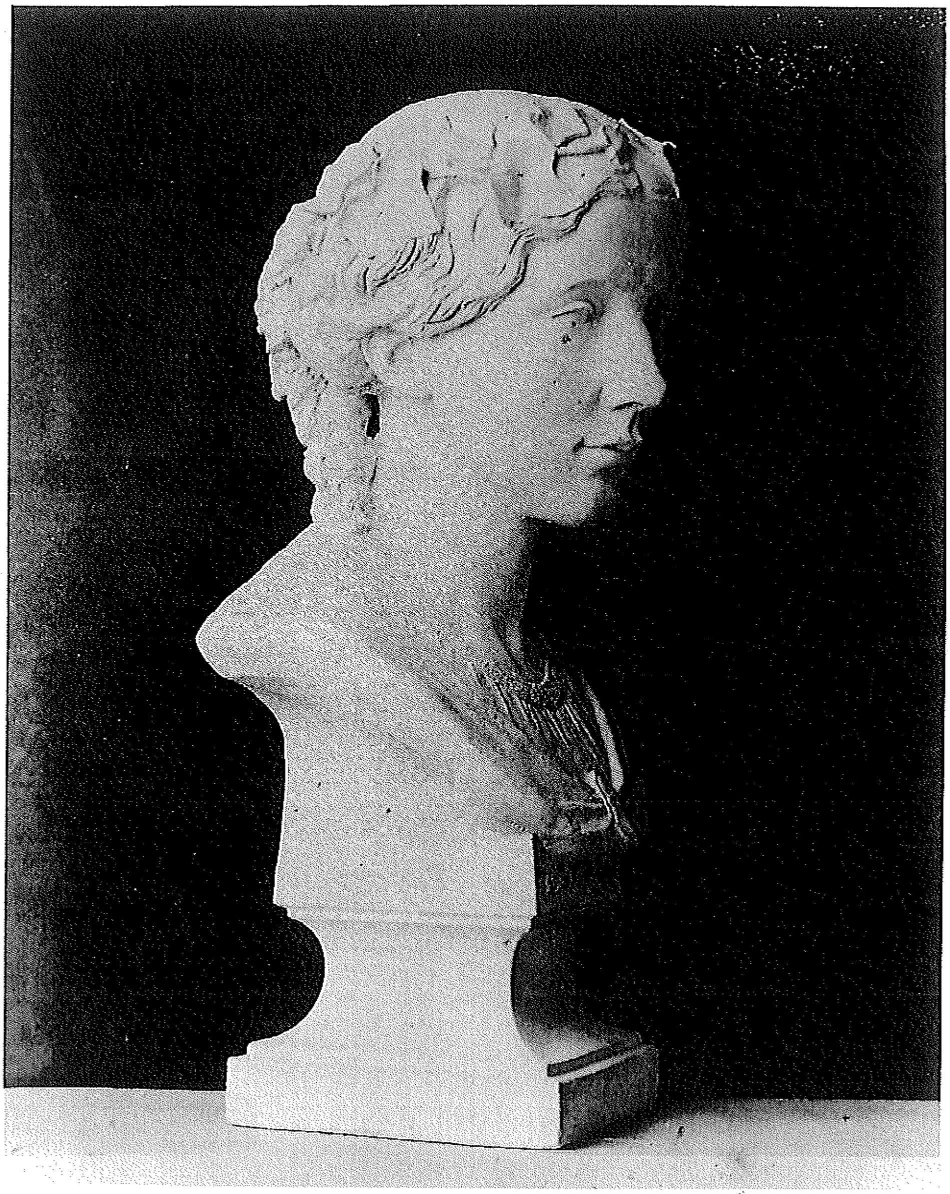

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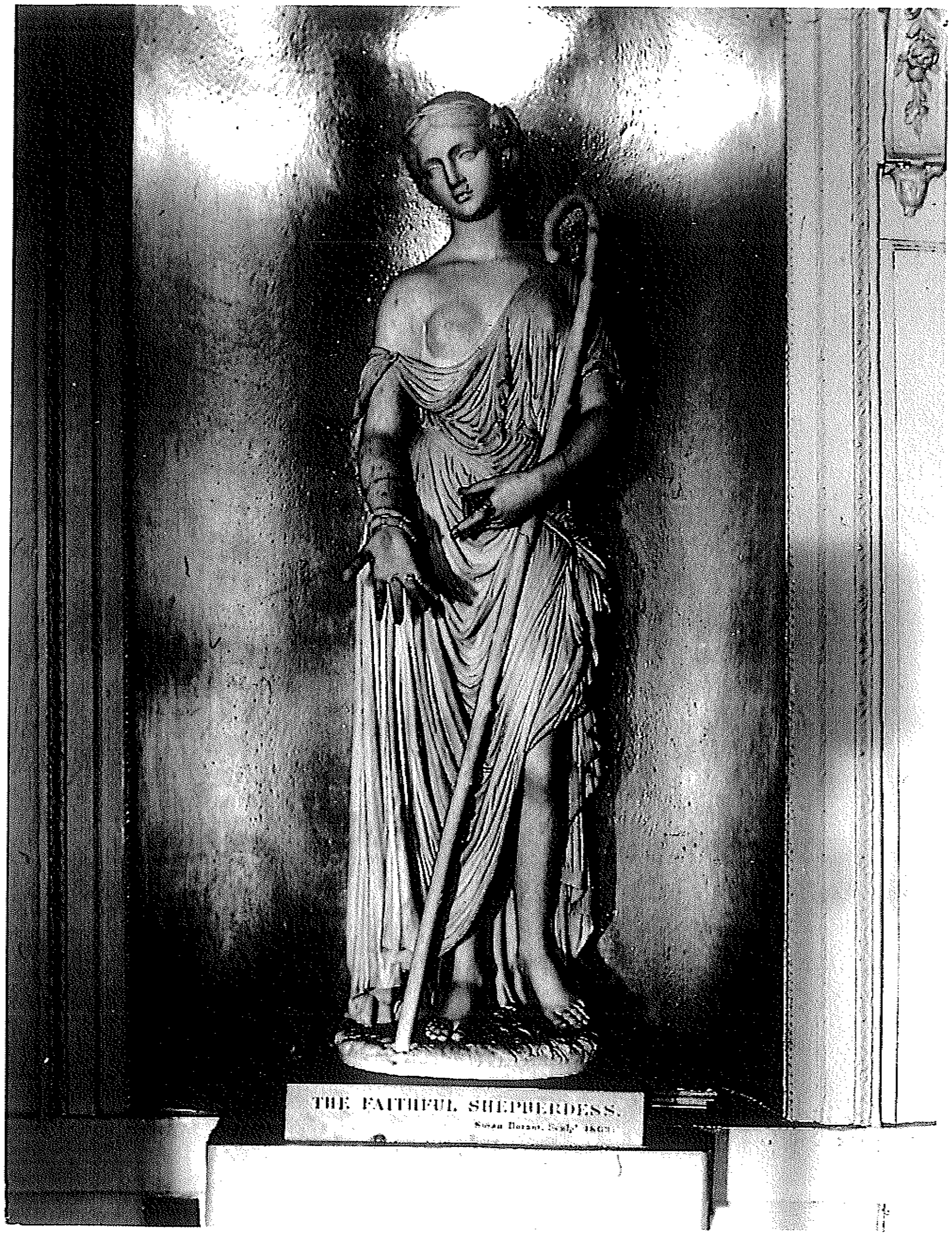
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Susan Durant, Sculpt 1863

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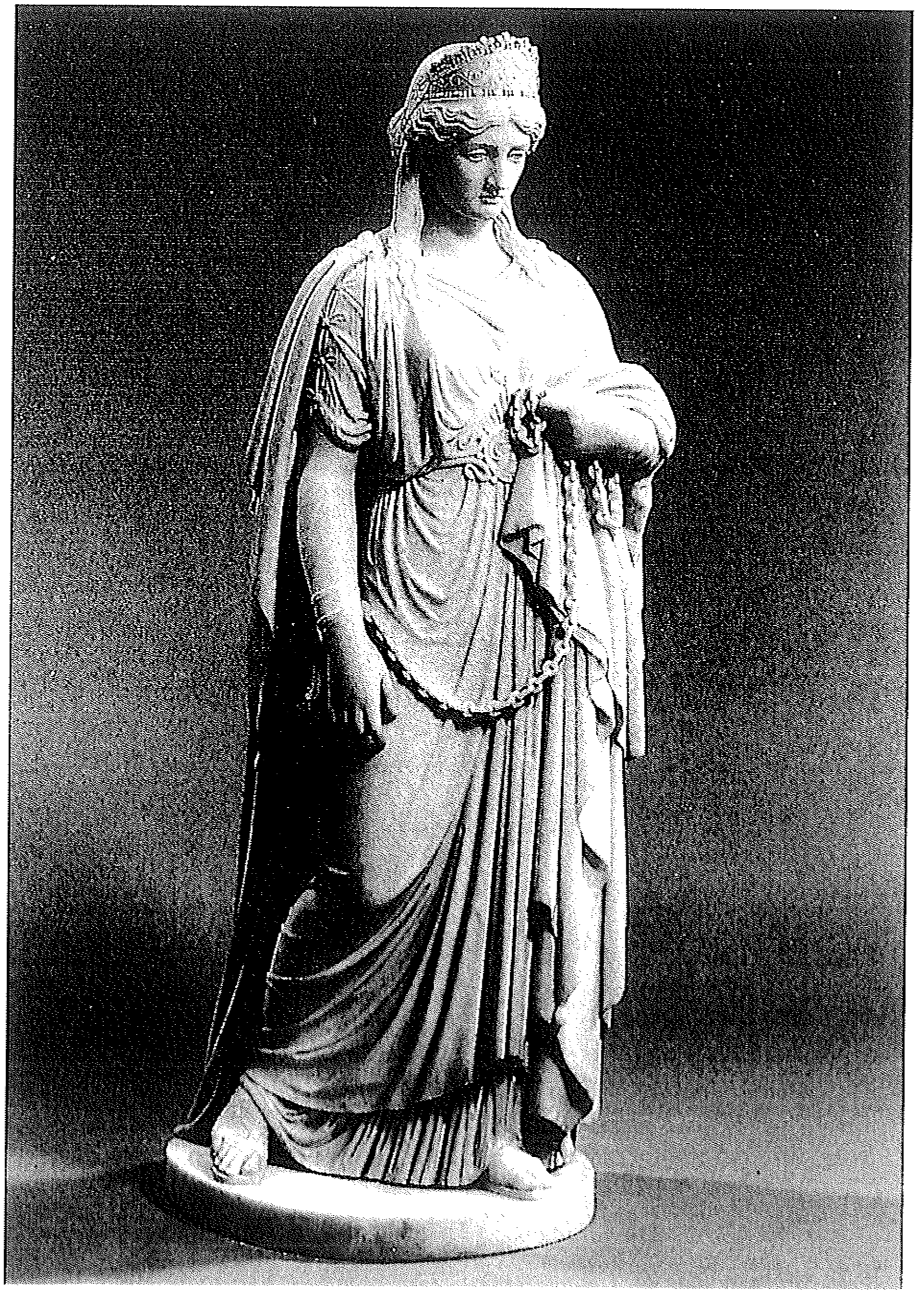

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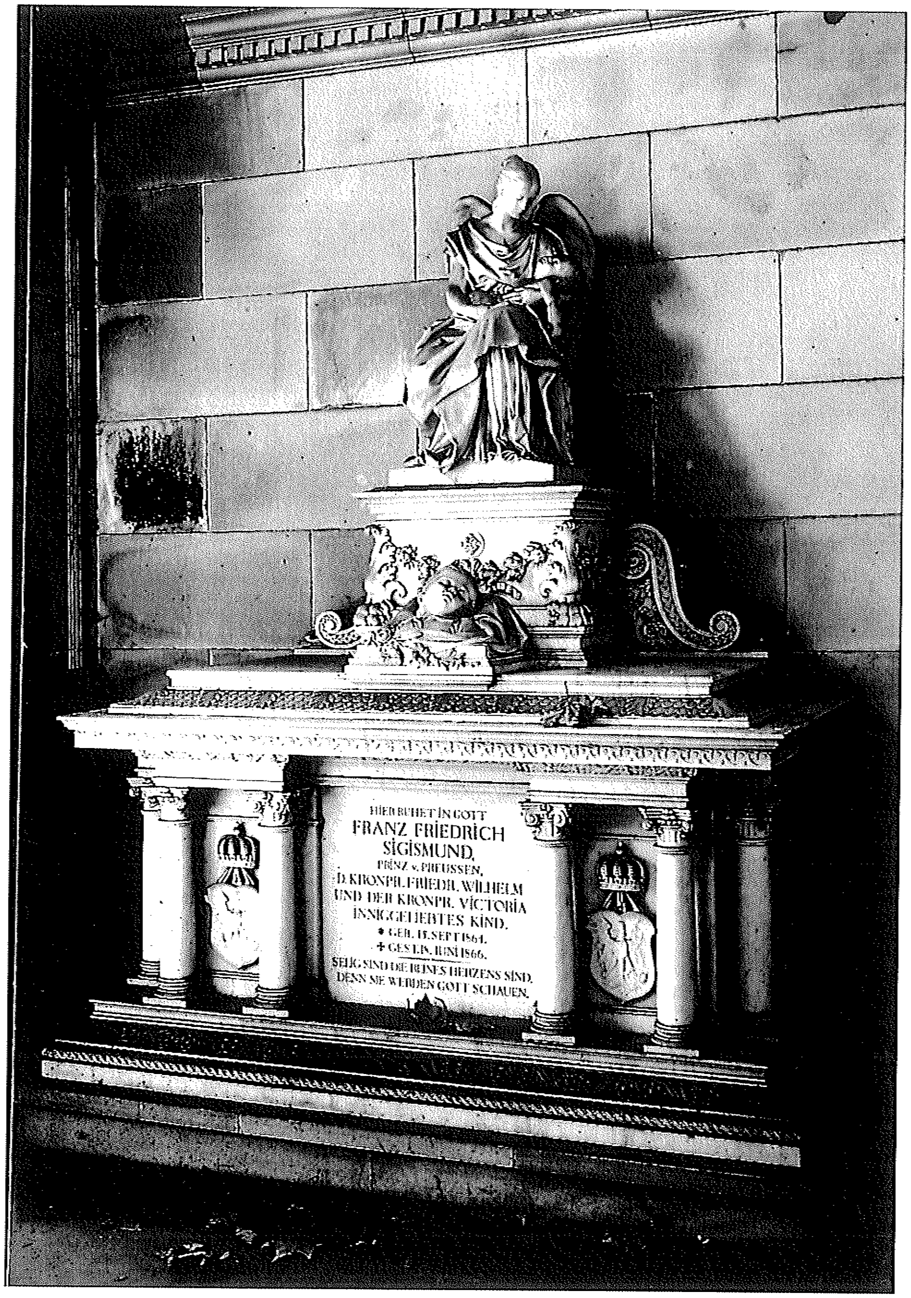
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