

The Walker Journals: Reminiscences of John Lavery and William Holman Hunt

Katharine A. Lochnan

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Résumé de l'article

Sir Edmund Walker (1846-1924) fut un humaniste réputé comme il y en eut peu au Canada. À Toronto, il prit part à la fondation du Royal Ontario Museum et de l'Art Gallery of Ontario ; il s'occupa aussi activement du développement de la Galerie nationale à Ottawa. Au début du siècle il faisait figure de leader parmi le groupe très restreint de Canadiens qui, par leur connaissance avertie des milieux internationaux de l'art, purent jouer un rôle déterminant dans le monde des beaux-arts. Ses fonctions de président de la Banque de commerce l'amenant à voyager, il eut l'occasion en 1909 de séjourner en Angleterre. Il y rencontra John Lavery (1856-1941) à qui il commanda un portrait, et il fut reçu par le peintre pré-raphaélite William Holman Hunt (1827-1910). Walker tint un journal personnel de 1899 à 1924. Les trois grands livres comptables dans lesquels il inscrivait ses souvenirs sont aujourd'hui à la bibliothèque Thomas Fisher de l'Université de Toronto. Nous présentons ici toutes les notes rédigées à la suite des séances de pose chez Lavery et des visites chez les Hunt. Walker y commente les méthodes de travail de Lavery et rapporte l'essentiel de leurs entretiens à l'atelier du peintre. À la suite de la quatrième séance, il fut reçu chez Holman Hunt, grâce à un jeune Canadien, Charles Trick Currelly (1876-1957) qui deviendra un des premiers directeurs du Royal Ontario Museum. Le témoignage de Walker sur Hunt, qui était presque aveugle et qui n'avait plus qu'une année à vivre, présente beaucoup d'intérêt. Hunt étant dans sa vieillesse un homme isolé de sa famille, comme en fait état une de ses descendantes, Evelyn Waugh, l'amitié de Walker et de Currelly fut donc en ce temps assez marquante. Après la mort de Hunt, Walker fut consulté sur l'établissement de la succession. Il acquit le portrait d'un moine canadien, *Henry Wentworth*, datant de 1858, au nom de la Galerie nationale du Canada.

The Walker Journals: Reminiscences of John Lavery and William Holman Hunt

KATHARINE A. LOCHNAN

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

In forming a picture of the late 19th-century artistic milieu in Canada, Sir Edmund Walker's *Journals*¹ are of great assistance. From 1899 until his death in 1924, Walker (1846-1924) kept a regular and detailed handwritten account of his many interests in three large ledger books now housed in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, across the street from his former home, Long Garth, at 99 St. George Street. As a diarist he combines vivid accounts with personal reflection, writing with the penetration of a sophisticated Edwardian (Fig. 1) who was well travelled and deeply involved in economic, cultural and political events. While much of the material in the *Journals* relates to commerce, current events and travel, there are occasional passages which demonstrate his great love of the fine arts, his friendships with artists in England and Canada, and the energy which he expended on behalf of museums in Canada.

These reminiscences have been extracted from the Walker *Journals* in part to draw attention to the existence of this important manuscript source. They are neither published nor indexed, and their length makes consultation difficult. For all those interested in the history of Canada during the first quarter of this century, they make invaluable and fascinating reading.

Although he was extremely busy as President of the Bank of Commerce, Walker made time for several avocations, one of which was the development of museums in Canada. No man was more involved in establishing three of the major museums in this country, combining financial and political acumen with expertise in the area of collecting. He was the dominant political force behind the founding of the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and was largely responsible for the for-

mation of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, which, following its founding in 1880, had been little more than a repository for Royal Canadian Academy diploma pieces until Walker became Chairman of the Governing Council in 1911.²

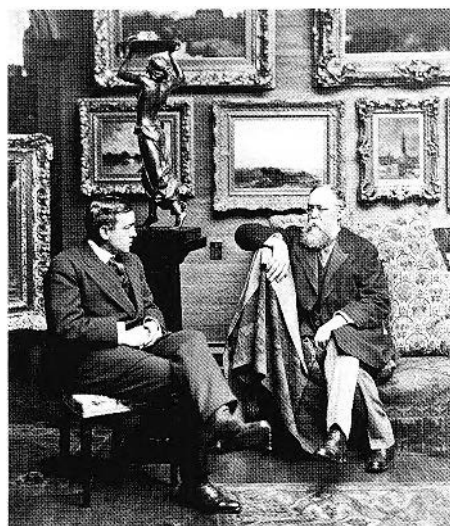


FIGURE 1. Sir Edmund Walker with Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton in the drawing room at Long Garth, c. 1912. Photograph reproduced with the kind permission of Prof. Alastair Walker, Kingston, Ontario.

¹ The *Journals* form part of the *Walker Papers* which are deposited in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. The *Papers* also include Walker's correspondence and miscellaneous material.

² Charles C. Hill, *The Royal Canadian Academy* (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 27 March-26 April 1980).



FIGURE 2. The dining room at Long Garth, c. 1921, showing Sir Edmund Walker's collection of majolica. Reproduced with the kind permission of Dr. Harold Hunter, Toronto.

Walker was an enthusiastic traveller. He journeyed extensively in Europe, Japan, and South America, and made regular business trips to London and New York. Wherever he went, he visited churches, museums, private collections, commercial galleries and artists' studios. His familiarity with the workings of the international art world made him one of a very small coterie in Canada equipped to play an important role in the area of the fine and applied arts (Fig. 2).

In visiting museums in the United States, Britain and Europe, Walker developed tastes in art which were consistent with the educated anglo-saxon taste of the day. He was drawn to the 'Primitives' of the Northern and Italian Renaissance, in particular to Van Dyck, Van der Weyden,³ Cimabue, Ghirlandaio, Lippi and Giotto.⁴ He was also interested in the 17th-century Dutch School⁵ and its 'modern' exponents, the Barbizon⁶ and Hague Schools.⁷ He had great difficulty, as did so many of his contemporaries, with French Impressionism and Cubism,⁸ although he did make an effort to understand the work of these schools. His taste was reflected in his personal collection of paintings which included works by members of the Hague and

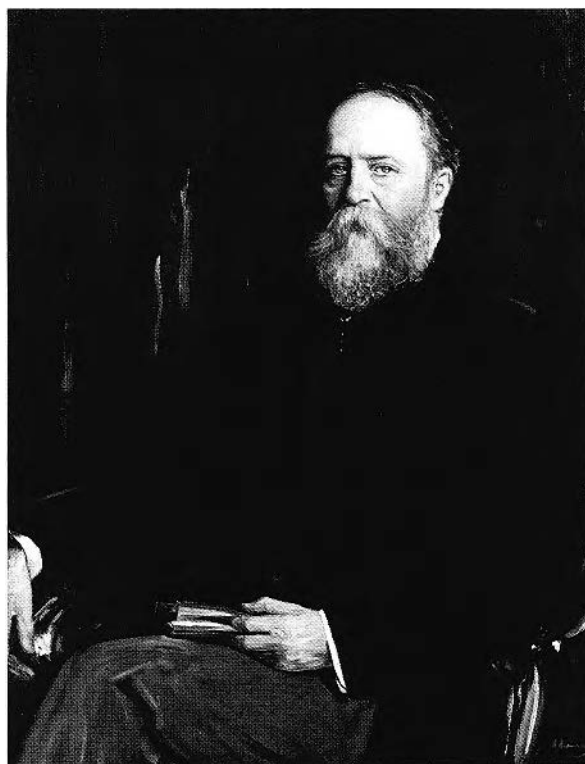


FIGURE 3. Sir John Lavery, *Portrait of Sir Edmund Walker*, 1909. Oil on canvas, 116.8 × 86.4 cm. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (Gift of the Estate of Sir Edmund Walker, 1925).

Barbizon schools, so popular in Montreal and Toronto at the turn of the century, as well as a few old master paintings, including two panels of a Flemish triptych, and two outstanding oil paintings of St. Mark's, Venice, by Francesco Guardi.

Sir Edmund furthered his artistic knowledge not only by visiting museums abroad, but also by gaining privileged access to major private collections. On 5 August 1913, he was a guest of Lord and Lady Ellesmere at Bridgewater House, and recorded the occasion in his *Journal*: 'Had tea with Lord and Lady Ellesmere and their daughter Lady Egerton. Most simple, easy people one could meet in such a palace. Five Raphaels in one room. Many Rembrandts, Claudes, Hobbemas, Ruysdaels, Cuyps, Metsus, and hosts of Dutchmen and all the post-Raphael Italians ... I was asked to come again as often as I wished when next in England and I certainly hope to do so.' On 22 April 1922, he was invited to Chatsworth House by the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. Sitting in the imposing library, he examined volume after volume of prints and drawings from one of the finest collections in private hands.⁹

3 *Journal*, 3 October 1909.

4 *Journal*, 17 October 1909.

5 *Journal*, 3 October 1909.

6 *Journal*, 3 October 1909.

7 *Journal*, 6 July 1909.

8 *Journal*, 17 February 1909.

9 See *Old Master Drawings from Chatsworth* (Royal Academy, London, 5 July-31 August 1969) and *Old Master Drawings from Chatsworth* (Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 1970).

Walker's special love of graphic arts led him to assemble a modest collection of European etchings and engravings, as well as a considerably more ambitious collection of Japanese prints. He was to put this knowledge to good use in establishing the Print Department at the National Gallery in Ottawa in 1913.¹⁰

In addition to visiting collectors and dealers, Walker made regular studio rounds whenever he was in London. On 2 August 1909 he visited those of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1863-1912) and John Macallan Swan (1847-1910). He wrote, 'Tadema's home is a most successfully splendid artist's residence but Swan's studio was much more interesting.' Sir Edmund, who was both a Canadian nationalist and supporter of the British Empire, admired Swan's work in progress: 'Great monuments for South Africa (Cecil Rhodes brooding over Africa) and for Australia, lovely small figures in silver, innumerable drawings and many things in progress.' He visited the artistic and literary connoisseurs Charles Ricketts (1866-1931) and Charles Hazelwood Shannon (1836-1937) on 28 May 1913, and wrote of them: 'They have lived together since they were students and spend all they make in buying works of art and Early Italian pictures, statuary, Japanese prints, etc., so that their rooms are like a museum. We had a long and delightful time with Shannon, not seeing Ricketts at all.'

During his visit to London in July, 1909, Walker kept a complete record of his encounters with John Lavery (1856-1941) and William Holman Hunt (1827-1910). He arranged to have his portrait painted by Lavery during the latter half of July and had five sittings with the artist, who kept him entertained with a steady flow of conversation about the London art world. The portrait which resulted was given by the Walker Estate to the National Gallery of Canada (Fig. 3). Walker also purchased three paintings by Lavery, possibly at this time, for his own collection: one was entitled *Sea Scape*, and two, *The Mediterranean from Tangiers*.

Lavery was a great admirer of the American artist James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), whose aestheticism and delicate palette had a considerable influence on a group of young painters known collectively as the Glasgow School, among whom was Lavery. Lavery had been involved with Whistler in the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, where he served as vice-president during Whistler's presidency. Following Whistler's death in 1903, Lavery organized

the 1905 Memorial Exhibition. Interest in Whistler was at its peak in 1909 with the publication of the Pennells' two-volume *Life of J.A.M. Whistler*. It is therefore not surprising that much of Lavery's conversation was composed of Whistlerian anecdote. The sitting began on July 14 from 10:00-12:00 p.m. Walker described Lavery and his working methods in his *Journal* entry:

Little man looking like anything but an artist. Born in Belfast but went to Glasgow to study and hence included in that school. Preliminary discussion as to pose, light, etc., occupied but a few minutes and after about half a dozen black chalk strokes on canvas indicating main positions, started in to paint. He placed opposite to the canvas, that is just behind his back, an oblong mirror, in which the sitter can see the reflections of every brush stroke. This not only interests all but the stupidest sitters, but it keeps the sitter's gaze in the right place and makes the whole business of sitting easier for him. Lavery's capacity is extraordinary and he is delightfully modest and direct. His long association with Whistler in the International Art Society brought out much anecdote and we talked about painters pretty nearly all the time. The progress at the end of an hour and a half of steady painting was surprisingly great.

On July 15, the second sitting took place at the same time in the morning, and the conversation was resumed:

He thinks Rembrandt, Velasquez and Corot the three greatest colourists the world has produced, and the three greatest landscape painters also. He regards Millet's colour as intellectual rather than natural although this is not his way of stating it. Turner he thinks was also not always an interpreter but painted out of his intellect sometimes. He appreciates Whistler's defects thoroughly but still thinks that he exercised the greatest beneficial effect on art of any one in the last century. He says Whistler had the most beautiful hands he ever saw on a man but he was not really clever with them. He painted with great difficulty and drew many things so incessantly that, because of this defect, Lavery who was called upon to pass on the genuineness of many Whistlers on the occasion of unofficial exhibitions, found this an easy test, the drawing of the bogus

10 A selection from Walker's European print collection is included in my *Sir Edmund Walker: Print Collector* (Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 22 November 1974-12 January 1975), while a selection of his Japanese prints is to be found in *Images of Eighteenth Century Japan* (Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 1975) by Prof. David Waterhouse. These exhibitions reflect the ultimate disposition of the European and Japanese prints given by the Walker Estate. An article discussing Walker's role in the founding of the National Gallery print room was published by the author in *Artmagazine*, May-June (1980), 24-28, entitled 'The Department of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery: The First Hundred Years.'

Whistlers being always too clever. He told many incidents illustrating his cleverness in concise statements although he could not make a speech. When someone drew his attention to West's 'Hope' Whistler said, 'Hope deferred, I suppose, what is the rest of it?' (Hope deferred maketh the heart sick!) Burne Jones' beautiful picture where the mermaid is drawing the sailor down through the sea was exhibited in Paris and created much interest. Whistler who had quarrelled with Burne Jones was asked if he had seen it, 'what do you mean,' said Whistler, 'that picture by Mr. Jones where the people are having trouble in the tank.'

Lavery then went on to tell the oft repeated story of the confrontation of Whistler and Leighton at the Royal Academy dinner:

Leighton and Whistler were apparently good friends and while Whistler was capable of any rudeness, being at bottom not a true gentleman, Leighton was supposed to be the *beau idéal* of courtliness. Yet when he was President of the R.A. he did not invite Whistler to any function of the R.A. and this during a period of several years. But, finally, Whistler became President of some Art Society – I suppose the International of which Lavery was vice for nine years – and in this capacity an invitation was sent as a matter of ordinary routine. When Whistler appeared and Leighton was about to receive him, Leighton said, 'Why Jimmy! I am delighted to see you – I don't believe you've ever honoured us with your presence before.' 'Yes' said Whistler, 'and I've such a poor excuse, Leighton, I was never asked.'

During Walker's fourth sitting (July 20) Lavery spoke of other friends:

Regards Cecil Lawson as perhaps the greatest English landscape painter of the recent time in England which pleased me. I mentioned his contemporaries George and Fred Walker, who also died young, and I recalled the exhibition a few years ago devoted entirely to the three. Lavery has no opinion of Fred Walker. Regards his work as sentimental appeals to the common mind. He is, however, never unkind in such remarks. There

is clearly no personal bias for any of his criticisms. His point of view of art would in any event make it impossible for him to understand men like Fred Walker.

During the Final sitting on 21 July, Lavery rambled on. Walker wrote:

What I recorded about Lavery's inability to sympathize with Fred Walker recalls something said by Hunt which I overlooked. He was speaking about the buying public and said something like this 'now there are those Barbizon pictures. Of course I don't wish to deny the past ability of some of the men in this school, but the positive craze to own their pictures at such fabulous prices is hard to understand.'

After the fourth sitting for Lavery on 20 July 1909, Walker went to visit the Pre-Raphaelite painter William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), who was nearly blind and had only a year to live.

Walker probably met Hunt¹¹ through the agency of a young Toronto archaeologist, Charles Trick Currelly (1876-1957).¹² Currelly, a former divinity student at Victoria College, University of Toronto, had gone to work in Egypt under the eminent Egyptologist, Sir Flinders Petrie, who was digging under the auspices of the Egypt Exploration Fund. Petrie was a friend of the Hunts,¹³ no doubt in part because of Hunt's longstanding interest in the lands of the Bible and his desire to achieve archaeological accuracy in his religious painting. After returning to London, Petrie took Currelly under his wing and introduced him to the Hunts. Currelly recorded the occasion in his autobiography:

'The Petries' very kindly took me into their home again, and I went out a good deal with them to some of the houses in London. One evening I met an extremely beautiful woman, Mrs. Holman Hunt, the wife of the founder of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. An invitation to dinner followed which had to be recalled as they were leaving town; instead there was an invitation to spend a weekend at their country home at Sonning. A wonderful weekend followed by an invitation to spend with them all the time I could spare and shortly afterwards I was asked to make their house my home while in England. This I did at intervals until 1930, when Mrs. Hunt was run down by a careless truck driver.¹⁴

Currelly was summoned to Mrs. Hunt's death-bed.¹⁵

While studying for the ministry at Victoria College, Currelly had become increasingly interested in the collection of miscellaneous artefacts

11 Auberon Waugh, in a letter to the author (8 January 1980), explains that Hunt's name should not be hyphenated: 'Hunt never used the hyphen. Holman was his Christian name, he was never called William. My grandmother insisted the rest of the family and his descendants used it because Queen Victoria suggested Hunt should – it sounded and looked more distinguished.'

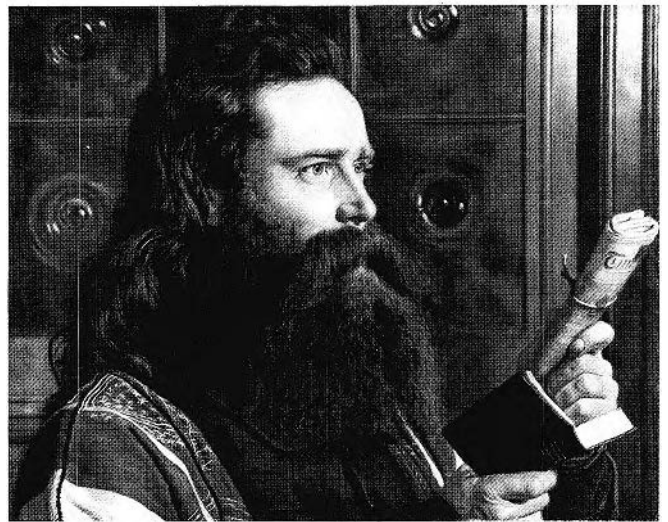
12 See Charles Trick Currelly, *I Brought the Ages Home* (Toronto, 1956).

13 Hunt reproduced a photograph of himself with Sir Flinders Petrie at Sonning in his autobiography, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, II (London, 1913), 382.

14 Currelly, 65-66.

15 Suzanne C. Hamilton (née Currelly) to the author, 30 October 1979.

FIGURE 4. William Holman Hunt, *Portrait of Henry Wentworth Monk*, 1858. Oil on canvas, 50.8 × 66 cm. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (Gift of the Estate of Sir Edmund Walker, 1925).



which had been growing there sent by missionaries trained in Toronto from around the globe. He felt that this collection should become the nucleus of a university museum. On a return visit to Canada in 1905, he sought Sir Edmund Walker, who was reputedly sympathetic to the idea of founding a public museum. Currelly had no difficulty gaining access to Walker as he had been a school friend of Walker's eldest son, Edmund, since boyhood. He described the meeting at 99 St. George St. as follows:

That evening I accordingly went to Walker's home. He was sitting in his library hunched down in a chair. I began to tell him of my hopes for a museum for Toronto. At last he said: 'For twenty years this has been a dream of mine, and it is a terrible grief to me to say that it is impossible. Toronto has lost its opportunity; objects are now so dear that it is utterly out of the question that we should be able to get sums of money that would get us anything worth while.' As I have always had a retentive memory for prices, I began to tell him the prices of various objects which it was possible to get, mainly in Egypt. Slowly he began to draw himself up in his chair, his eyes glowing and he promised to come and see the few things I had brought home in my baggage.¹⁶

Walker was won over by Currelly's reports about the bargains to be had on the antiquities market in Cairo. From that time, they worked together to establish the Royal Ontario Museum, which was founded shortly afterwards following Walker's persuasive presentation to the Trustees of the University.¹⁷

Following Walker's fourth sitting with Lavery, Currelly met him and took him to visit the Hunts.

From the lengthy description in his *Journal* (July 20, 1909), it would seem likely that this was Walker's first encounter with Hunt:

with Currelly to call on the Holman Hunts who now live in a house built on part of what used to be Little Holland House¹⁸ sacred to the memory of so many interesting people, George Watts and the Primitives, Thackeray, etc. Holman Hunt is 84, and although his eyes do not show it, he is nearly blind. Gentle and natural, and entirely absorbed in his past work, one could only listen, and this was a very great privilege. The altogether splendid 'Lady of Shalott'¹⁹ is there, and he spent a long time in explaining a picture crowded with figures and objects and incidents connected with the annual ceremony of calling down the sacred fire from heaven, in the Greek church.²⁰ There was in the studio a portrait of a man with bushy red-brown hair and beard and a folded copy of the *Times* and a Greek bible in his hand (Fig. 4). He was plainly some sort of

¹⁶ Currelly, 129.

¹⁷ The Royal Ontario Museum ceased to be part of the University of Toronto in July, 1968.

¹⁸ Hunt lived at 18 Melbury Road. For Little Holland House, see William Gaunt, *Kensington and Chelsea* (London, 1975), 223-6, 229. Hunt lived in the Kensington artistic community, close to Leighton and to Little Holland House.

¹⁹ Hunt worked on *The Lady of Shalott* (now in the Manchester City Art Gallery) over a period of many years, from 1857 to 1905 and worked alternately on *The Lady of Shalott* and 'The Holy Fire' picture following his return from Egypt in 1892. (See Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, II, 317).

²⁰ This painting was entitled *The Miracle of Sacred Fire, Church Sepulchre, Jerusalem*, 1892 (repro. Hunt, 313). Hunt wrote: 'While progressing with this work the Greek Easter was at hand, and I felt it would be a pity if I, who had seen the wild ceremony of the miracle of the Holy Fire so often, and know the difference between the accidental episodes which occur, and those which are fundamental, should not take

missionary. Holman Hunt explained that this was a portrait of a Canadian named Monk of Ottawa²¹ who spent his life preaching, mainly in the east, the doctrine of peace among the Nations and who worried the czar constantly with manifestoes, etc. Hunt painted him when both were comparatively young, and suggested that in a small way Monk had helped to create the Hague conference. After tea in the garden he was practically led about the rooms but he 'explained' his pictures just as if he could see them as clearly as ever and he sees enough to know whereabouts he is in the house. In addition to many of Hunt's own works there were grand things by early Italians, particularly two Tintoretto oil sketches, and a fine picture possibly by John Bellini. The house has five Della Robbias one in marble, and splendid oriental faience etc. He told me an interesting story about a funny portrait called Bianca,²² illustrated in his book. The aim of the P.R.B.'s²³ had been to paint human beings as individuals, not as types, and Hunt thought Rossetti was departing from this. At a ball in Florence, Hunt saw a young girl – American – whose face attracted him in this connections. His desire, explained to a friend, to be

introduced to her, was overheard by the girl's mother, and thus Hunt painted her in a sort of Medieval dress. As the mother did not buy the picture, it was sold at once by Hunt's London agent but the buyer's name was not recorded, which Hunt frequently regretted. Many years after, his daughter, while visiting a friend in the country, was taken to call at a house where she found the picture. Subsequently and recently Hunt, on the death of the owner, bought back the picture, partly because he desired to illustrate it in his book. For years all trace of the young lady who was the real Bianca had been lost, but she also came to light, a middle-aged lady, of course, and a widow. She had lived always in Europe mainly in England and had often realized that her mother should have bought the picture at the time of its painting. Hunt gave her and her friends the opportunity again and lately a relative has arranged to buy it although the lady herself does not apparently yet know it.

Currelly was married at about this time from the Hunts' London house.²⁴ On July 29, Walker was invited to join Currelly and his bride for lunch at Melbury Road. On this occasion, Walker recounts:

Mrs. Hunt showed me the catalogue she has made of the objects of art: Majolica, Hispano-Moresque, and much else picked up by Holman Hunt and which will probably be sold at his death. The catalogue is a series of low-tiered photographs of the objects, coloured by Mrs. Hunt, with a very beautiful result. And a good look at the early Italian and other pictures and it seemed too bad that we had to run away at 3 p.m.

Shortly thereafter the Hunts repaired to their country retreat at Sonning and left the Currellys to enjoy a honeymoon at their London home.

A year later (30 July 1910), the Hunts settled for the last time at Sonning, which Hunt had built in 1901 when failing vision put an end to his dreams of travel. He fell ill on 19 August and was moved to London two weeks later. Currelly writes, 'I was sent for and was with him when he died. As the eldest son, Cyril, was in the Straits Settlements, and his other son Hilary was in Burma, I took charge of things as much as possible.'²⁵ He died on 7 September, was cremated, and his ashes buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. At Mrs. Hunt's request, Currelly was present at the crematorium, and carried the ashes up the steps of St. Paul's in the funeral ceremony, where they were laid to rest near those of Turner and the Duke of Wellington.

While the date of Walker's last visit to the Hunts is not known, it would appear from a reference to a recent visit in the *Journal* entry for 29 September 1910, to have taken place only a

the opportunity of perpetuating for future generations the astounding scene which many writers have so vividly described.' It was begun in Jerusalem in 1892, and after being exhibited at the New Gallery and at Liverpool, Hunt said 'I then determined to retain it in my own house as being of a subject understood as yet only by the few (316-322).'

²¹ Henry Wentworth Monk was born in March Township, Upper Canada, and met Hunt in Palestine in 1854. He was described in Hunt's autobiography as a religious Zealot who was 'regarded by the Jerusalem church folds to be an impious babbler, his efforts forsooth furthering nothing less than the actual realization of Hebrew prophecies for the establishment of the Kingdom of Peace on earth.' Monk lived with Hunt upon his return to England, and it was at this time that Hunt painted his portrait. Walker must have been doubly impressed by this work because of its importance in Hunt's early phase and its Canadian subject-matter. See Thomas B. Brumbaugh, 'Two William Holman Hunt Letters to John Clifford, chiefly concerning Henry Wentworth Monk,' *The Pre-Raphaelite Review*, III (November 1979), 86-90.

²² The story of Bianca is told by Diana Holman-Hunt in *My Grandfather His Lives and Loves* (London, 1969), 262-3. Hunt met the sitter in Florence in 1868 where he had gone as a widower, in part to recover from the memory of his wife's death and in part to escape the pain of his love for her younger sister, Edith, who was looking after Hunt's son, Cyril, in London. Hunt found himself once again susceptible to female charm, and was attracted to a beautiful, fair American girl from a good family. He persuaded her to sit for the painting which bore the inscription on the frame, 'Bianca, The Patroness of Heavenly Harmony'. Hunt's friend Stephens, who was promoting Edith's interests, clearly tried to put Hunt off the American, and Hunt subsequently married Edith.

²³ The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, of which Hunt was the co-founder, had each member put the initials P.R.B. on their works to indicate their support of its ideals.

²⁴ Letter from S.C. Hamilton to the author, 30 October 1979.

²⁵ Currelly, 191.

few weeks before his death. Following Hunt's death, Sir Edmund Walker assisted Mrs. Edith Holman Hunt in clearing up a problem having to do with Hunt's Canadian investments, which were delaying settlement of the Estate.²⁶ Shortly after Hunt's death in 1911, Walker purchased the *Portrait of Henry Wentworth Monk*, 1858 (which he had seen in the studio on 20 July 1909), for the National Gallery of Canada from the Hunt Estate (Fig. 4).²⁷

It is interesting to note that the two Canadians, Walker and Currelly, were perhaps closer to Hunt during the last years of his life and at the time of his death than anyone else. Late in life Hunt was perceived by his own family as a recluse, and was quite cut off from his relatives. Evelyn Waugh, a descendant of Hunt, wrote in 1969 that 'there can be no one alive today who can claim Hunt's friendship. There were few at the time of his death, and there are not many anecdotes of him in the reminiscences of the period. He does not seem to have been a likeable man. My father who got on with most people, stayed with him as a young man when Hunt was at the height of his fame and found him impenetrably aloof.'²⁸ It is therefore of particular interest in reconstructing Hunt's last years to draw attention to the special relationship which he and his second wife Edith enjoyed with Walker and Currelly, one which would appear from their reminiscences to have been intimate and happy.

While Walker's memoirs of Hunt and Lavery are of documentary interest in studying the work of the two artists, they are of special importance

to Canada in that they demonstrate the ease with which Sir Edmund moved about in the art world in Britain. Walker, who was arguably Canada's greatest philanthropist in the area of the fine arts, was a man of taste and sophistication, who had *entrée* wherever he went. He was uniquely equipped to undertake the belated and ambitious task of launching museums in Canada, at a time when there was little sympathy for such concerns in English speaking Canada. His weapons against ignorance and philistinism were political and economic savvy wedded to a sound knowledge and love for the fine and applied arts. In addition, he enjoyed personal friendships with artists in Canada and abroad, and was active on both sides of the Atlantic.

Note: I would like to thank Prof. Conrad Heidenreich for permission to quote at length from Sir Edmund Walker's papers, and Cynthia Heidenreich for her generous assistance with this project. I would also like to thank Diana Holman-Hunt and Auberon Waugh for the interest they have taken in the Walker-Hunt connection, and for permitting me to quote Evelyn Waugh.

²⁶ There are several letters concerning this matter in the *Walker Papers*, although the exact nature of the investments is not known. See Mrs. Holman Hunt to Walker (10 May 1911), and Walker to Mrs. Holman Hunt (12 June 1911).

²⁷ The purchase of this painting is mentioned in the *Walker Papers* (Walker to Mrs. Holman Hunt, 12 June 1911). Mrs. Hunt apparently gave a group of letters between Monk and Hunt to the National Gallery.

²⁸ Evelyn Waugh in Diana Holman-Hunt, *My Grandfather His Lives and Loves*, 294.

RÉSUMÉ

Sir Edmund Walker (1846-1924) fut un humaniste réputé comme il y en eut peu au Canada. À Toronto, il prit part à la fondation du Royal Ontario Museum et de l'Art Gallery of Ontario; il s'occupa aussi activement du développement de la Galerie nationale à Ottawa. Au début du siècle il faisait figure de leader parmi le groupe très restreint de Canadiens qui, par leur connaissance avérée des milieux internationaux de l'art, purent jouer un rôle déterminant dans le monde des beaux-arts. Ses fonctions de président de la Banque de commerce l'amenaient à voyager, il eut l'occasion en 1909 de séjourner en Angleterre. Il y rencontra John Lavery (1856-1941) à qui il commanda un portrait, et il fut reçu par le peintre pré-raphaélite William Holman Hunt (1827-1910). Walker tint un journal personnel de 1899 à 1924. Les trois grands livres comptables dans lesquels il inscrivait ses souvenirs sont aujourd'hui à la bibliothèque Thomas Fisher de l'Université de Toronto. Nous présentons ici toutes les notes rédigées à la suite des séances de pose chez Lavery et des visites chez les Hunt. Walker y commente les méthodes de travail de Lavery et rapporte l'essentiel de leurs entretiens à l'atelier du peintre. À la suite de la quatrième séance, il fut reçu chez Holman Hunt, grâce à un jeune Canadien, Charles Trick Currelly (1876-1957) qui deviendra un des premiers directeurs du Royal Ontario Museum. Le témoignage de Walker sur Hunt, qui était presque aveugle et qui n'avait plus qu'une année à vivre, présente beaucoup d'intérêt. Hunt étant dans sa vieillesse un homme isolé de sa famille, comme en fait état une de ses descendantes, Evelyn Waugh, l'amitié de Walker et de Currelly fut donc en ce temps assez marquante. Après la mort de Hunt, Walker fut consulté sur l'établissement de la succession. Il acquit le portrait d'un moine canadien, *Henry Wentworth*, datant de 1858, au nom de la Galerie nationale du Canada.
