

May 31. 1870.

Very truly and
Believable
Yours
Mr. Wm. Barlow

to

Henry Bicknell Esq

My dear Sir

Just to live & thank
you for your kindness
& shall have much

pleasure in reporting
myself on my return
in haste

Mr. Thomas Oldham Barlow was born at Oldham, near Manchester. From a very early age his desire was to be a painter or an engraver. His father wisely yielded to his wish; but, on making inquiries, thought he would have a better chance of success in the use of the graver than of the brush, and therefore placed him with Messrs. Stephenson and Royston, engravers, of Manchester. He became a student in the School of Design there, and gained the first prize (ten guineas) for a design exhibited under the title of "Cullings from Nature." At the Manchester Exhibition he saw a small picture by the late John Phillip, entitled "Courtship," and endeavoured to persuade a friend to purchase it, that he might engrave it before coming to London; but this he was reluctantly obliged to abandon. Soon after coming to London he made the acquaintance of a gentleman who suggested his engraving a picture, and offered to supply the necessary means. He therefore went to the first exhibition that was opened (that of the British Institution), where, to his delight, the first picture that caught his eye was the very picture which he had desired to engrave in Manchester. This introduced him to the late John Phillip, whose first copyright Mr. Barlow therefore purchased for £5—Mr. Phillip having at first refused to take anything for it; and thus began their well-known friendship. Their similarity of taste and feeling was so marked that they seemed inseparable; and during the twenty years in which they were (it might be almost said) united, their common friends could scarcely mention the one without the other. Even since John Phillip has passed away, the presence of Thomas Oldham Barlow seems almost to bring the departed into the circles in which they used to move together. This intimacy and sympathy naturally resulted in Mr. Barlow engraving most of Phillip's pictures; and, while his other works show how thoroughly he can enter into the feeling of the artists whose pictures he engraves, especially those of Mr. Millais, nowhere does he seem more at home than in the works of his departed friend. The estimation in which Mr. Barlow is held has been seen from the fact that he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy by an almost unanimous vote. It is a source of congratulation that, while the limited number of Associate Engravers renders the election of them rare, Mr. Barlow has not had to wait until his powers are on the wane, but has received this distinction in the full vigour of his life. He has just finished an engraving of the diploma picture of the late John Phillip: its title, "Prayer in Spain." It might be called "The Pharisee and Publican;" for one figure seems to be kissing her cross and coquetting with religion, whilst the other, a poor sorrow-stricken sufferer, hardly ventures to lift her eye for some slight gleam of light upon the darkness of her spirit. Certainly the work is a fine example of Phillip's wonderful power of subtle perception. The public will be glad to know that Mr. Barlow has undertaken to make a collection of all Phillip's works for this year's International Exhibition. The following are some of the principal works engraved by Mr. Barlow:—After John Phillip, R.A., "Courtship," "Spanish Gipsy Mother;" "Augustus Egg, R.A.," "H.R.H. Prince Consort," "The House of Commons, 1860," "Dona Pepita," "Seville," "The Prison Window," "Prayer." After J. J. Sant, R.A., "Mother and Child." After F. W. Topham, "Making Nets." After W. P. Frith, R.A., "Charles Dickens." After Henrietta Browne, "Sisters of Mercy." After Sir G. Kneller, "Sir Isaac Newton." After H. Wallis, "The Death of Chatterton;" and after J. E. Millais, "The Huguenot," "My First Sermon," "My Second Sermon," "Awake," "Asleep," and "John Fowler, Esq., C.E."

The Portrait is engraved from a photograph by Messrs. Elliott and Fry, of Baker-street.