

THE EXHIBITION PAMPHLET FOR  
W. HOLMAN HUNT'S *THE SHADOW OF DEATH*

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The pamphlets that William Holman Hunt produced for several of his major paintings have great value to the student of Hunt and Victorian painting; they exemplify the way artists and dealers like Ernest Gambart and Thomas Agnew found a way to create what was essentially the beginnings of a mass market for unique art objects. The exhibition material that Hunt created for the exhibition of *The Shadow of Death* in 1873 not only significantly illuminates his complex intentions in relation to subject, style, and iconography, but also shows his relation to his reviewers and his successful attempt to make a politically and religiously controversial work fashionable. The fifteen-page pamphlet entitled *Mr. Holman Hunt's Picture, "The Shadow of Death."* divides into three parts, the first of which explains in detail what the painter wanted his audience to understand about his work, which was exhibited by itself, thereby a very special work of art, one not to be shown with other canvases.

The second part of the pamphlet, which bears the title "Opinions of the Press," consists entirely of two long reviews, the first from the *The Times* of 2 December 1873 and the second from *The Athenaeum* of 29 November 1873. The reviewer for *The Athenaeum* was F.G. Stephens, an original member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood who long remained one of the artist's closest friends to whom he had written at length from Jerusalem about the picture and the problems that he endured while painting it.<sup>1</sup> This review was not the first time that Stephens thus assisted his friend's cause: when Hunt exhibited *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, his characteristically original (or idiosyncratic) combination of a traditional disputa with a reconceived annunciation or conversion scene, Stephens produced for sale at the exhibition a long monograph, *William Holman Hunt and His Work*, parts of which Hunt may well have dictated or even written himself. Since we know that Hunt explained his goals to his friends in still-extant letters, we have the opportunity