**Helen Georgina Tabor, 1864–1933**

Helen Tabor (née Leipner) was born in Clifton, Bristol, as youngest child of Professor (Frederick Julius) Adolph Leipner and his wife Henrietta (Sophia Helena). When she was baptised at St Paul’s, Clifton, on 13 August 1864 the family address was given as 22 Upper Park Street but by 1871 they had moved out to Westbury-on-Trym. She had three older brothers and their parents were both native Germans. Aloph Leipner, who taught German and natural sciences at (then) University College, Bristol, was a naturalised British citizen but born in Saxony. So was Henrietta: her birthplace in census returns is specifically given as Dresden.

On 17 March 1894 Helen married George Hugo Tabor (b. *c.*1857), an artist and art teacher, at St Mary’s, Tyndall’s Park, Clifton. They appear to have had just one child, Hugo Leipner Tabor, who was three months old when the 1901 census was taken and they were living at Bromley Villa, Strawberry Hill Road, Twickenham. Helen’s husband (apparently known as Hugo) was by then on the staff of Teddington School of Art in Church Road, where she was also a pupil from about 1902 to 1905. What her earlier training may have been is unknown but her posthumous oil portrait of George Frederick Schacht (1823–96) Vice President of the Pharmaceutical Society, which was commissioned in 1897, shows she must have had some – and prior reputation – by that time.

Press reports of Teddington Art School exhibitions from 1902 to 1907 in the *Surrey Comet*, make complimentary comments on her work as a draughtswoman and painter in both figure and landscape subjects. They also show she was continuing to have success with local portrait commissions. In late summer 1905 an oil still-life by her was included in the Board of Education exhibition at South Kensington of prize works from the national art schools, and was awarded a bronze medal there (*Surrey Comet*, 2 September). Also in September 1905, by which time the Tabors appear to have been living at The Cottage, 31 Twickenham Road, Teddington, the Thames Valley Art Club was formed with Hugo as its honorary secretary, and Helen’s entries in its first spring exhibition at Teddington in 1906 were also praised by the *Comet*. A Cornish view and a portrait of an Etaples (Normandy) fisher-girl showed the geographical range of her work to that date, and she won first prize for a portrait of ‘Gundreda, daughter of Colonel D. Spiller’. Although the last was reported as for submission to the Royal Academy, it did not appear there but did so at the first London Salon of the Allied Artists Association in 1908, with portraits of the three daughters of S. Brounger Esq., and ‘Landing Fish, Etaples’. Johnson & Greutner note that Helen Tabor also exhibited five more works at the London Salon by 1915 but none were before 1911. *Surrey Comet* reports of the Thames Valley Arts Club exhibitions of 1907 and 1909 further show her gaining notice for seascape subjects.

The three paintings listed on Art UK demonstrate a marked difference between her portraits and her landscape style. Though competent and with strong sitter presence, the former are conventional: the single landscape (Royal West of England Academy) of a large, low-profile house backed by idiosyncratically painted pine trees and all set behind an unusual monumental stone gateway, is in a more colourfully fluent and modern style. While a very small sample, the difference suggests that her apparent return to training after her son was born in 1901 may have been to redevelop her manner, at least for non-portrait work, perhaps encouraged by her husband. In the 1911 census, by which time her widowed mother (then 86) was also living with them, she is listed as ‘artist’ but how far in either direction that applied remains for confirmation.

Helen Tabor was herself widowed but still living at 31 Twickenham Road at the time of her death on 1 June 1933. This occurred at Sunbury Place, French Street, Sunbury on Thames, however, which may have been home of her son, Hugo, by then a poultry salesman. In August he was granted probate on her estate, listed as ‘Effects £1717–7s–6d.’

*Summarised from Art UK discussion on Helen Tabor’s undated ‘A Stone Gateway with a House and Trees Beyond’ (RWA, Bristol)*

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