



The Pre-Raphaelites.

By Alice Blythe Tucker Wilcox.

Five years ago, while studying in Oxford University, I saw in Keble College a picture about which I then knew nothing, but before which I stood a long time in deep admiration and sincere interest. The impression it made on me was such that the next day, and for many days following, I spent time studying it, always finding in it some new beauty. This picture was Wm. Holman Hunt's "The Light of the World."

As one looks at the canvas, one's first thought is likely to be of the unusual character of Christ's face. Painters who have endeavored to depict the sorrow of Christ as He thinks of the sin of the world, have usually given the expression of grief only to the eyes, while the brow and cheeks remain fair and smooth. Hunt is truer in his conception. The face is lined and seamed with grief, while a deep compassion makes beautiful the eyes. It is a face of peculiar and impressive unselfishness and yearning, and as such it makes a strong appeal to the beholder. The door before which Christ stands, anxiously knocking, is overgrown with ivy and fennel, the nails and bolts are rusted, the sill is choked with weeds—all emblematical of the world's forgetfulness of the things of the spirit. Everything in the picture is symbolical, and yet there is no detail that does not seem perfectly natural. Instead of the conventional halo, the full moon shines behind Christ's head, and its rays, coming through the low boughs of an orchard, whose apples, emblems of the fall, strew the foreground, blend with the light from the lantern with strange and beautiful effect. Christ's seamless white robe typifies the united church of His followers; the jewelled clasps of the mantle, one square and one round, the old and new Testaments. The golden crown of our Lord is entwined with the thorns of the crucified Saviour, and it is significant of the continued sin of the world that from the latter new leaves are sprouting.

The painter's methods were most painstaking and unusual. To get the light of the background as he wished it to be, Hunt painted out of doors in an orchard every moonlight night for three months, from nine o'clock till five. While working in his studio, he darkened one end of the room, put a lantern in the hand of his lay-figure, and painted this interior through a hole in the curtain. Again, to get the exact effect of the moonlight and lantern-light combined, as it appears in the foreground of the picture, he let the moon's rays stream into the room to mix with those from the lantern. For three long years the artist labored at this picture, and when it was finished, Ruskin pronounced it to be "The most perfect instance of expressional purpose, with technical power, which the world has yet produced."

Hunt was one of a small group of young artists who were determined to free English painting from many of the conventionalities which prevented artists from painting what they saw, and from giving free rein to the beauty of imagination. It had become an accepted belief that only by constant copying of Raphael and his great contemporaries could a painter develop his powers. One evening, at the home of John Everett Millais, Hunt and his friend Dante Gabriel



The Light of the World.

From a painting by Holman Hunt, 1827—.

Rossetti saw a book of engravings from frescoes in the Campo Santa, at Pisa, done by artists prior to the time of Raphael. The simple devotional spirit and the realism of design and execution impressed most strongly the three artists, and they then and there banded themselves into what they called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Their aim was to be true to nature as they saw it, and to the promptings of their own imagination, without relying on the guidance of any school, but turning for inspiration to the childlike unconventionality of the early Italian painters. Ruskin was their strong ally. Although their work met at first with the severest possible criticism, it gradually, through its truth and beauty, won its way to favor. Hunt, Millais and Rossetti differed widely in the subjects they chose, and in the manner of execution, but the pictures of all three are peculiarly satisfying.

I have already mentioned the strength and beauty of conception, and the care in detail which characterize the paintings of Hunt. A simplicity that in reality is the outcome of the highest technical ability to express his subject, is the chief characteristic of Millais' work. "Everybody loves Millais," said Ruskin, referring to his pictures, and in truth they make somewhat the same appeal to both the skilled and

unskilled in art and its interpretation as does Longfellow's poetry in the realm of literature.

Rossetti's pictures, while exquisite in form and coloring, and very beautiful in themselves, were usually painted to illustrate one of his poems, which should be read to understand fully the subject.

While the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood soon disbanded, the effect of its ideals still lives. Not only through it has English painting gained in simplicity and freedom, but all other arts have felt the salutary influence of these three brave spirits. Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti, who determined that they would not be bound by meaningless tradition.

The Women's Institute Convention at Guelph.

The keynote of President Creelman's welcoming address to the Women's Institute at the Guelph Convention (Dec. 8th), was "Do things." He considered that the W. I. is accomplishing much, but reminded his hearers that there is a great field before them. "In this country we are just on the edge of things," he said. Our aim should be to raise the standard along all lines of farm production, and the women can help to bring this about, if they will. The Macdonald Institute is flourishing be-

cause the idea has gone abroad that the women of the country should be trained for their work. The authorities at Guelph want the farm girls in the Institute. They do not want them to be crowded out by town and city girls, but, in order that they shall not be, it is necessary that application be made early, even months ahead.

Mrs. Talcott, of Bloomfield, replied happily to the address of welcome. Service, she considered the greatest work of all. "What can you do with your gifts and accomplishments?" is the grand question. Things have not been accomplished by the dreamers. The W. I. has talked much about housing, feeding, and the comfort of people. There are deeper questions, not of material prosperity, but of efficiency. The trouble with us all is the lack of a high conceit. If each felt that he or she could make a bit of the world more sweet; if each should say, "The world has need of me or I would not be," what might not be accomplished?

REVIEW OF THE YEAR'S WORK.

There was a renewed note of confidence this year in the customary address of the Superintendent, Mr. Putnam, on "The Year's Work." The W. I., he said, has done enough to disprove some of the statements made by the fearful who have been watching—enough to demonstrate that, as an institution, it "means something." Educators and legislators have not realized the necessity of taking especial information to the homes for the education of the homemaker. It is little wonder, then, that women have taken advantage of the privileges afforded by the W. I., and the influence may be seen to-day, even in the remotest districts, in improved homes and greater hope for the future. With less manual labor and a little more thought, the family is accomplishing more; with better prepared food, the family is better nourished; and, with better management, more time is left for reading and recreation. Subjects for conversation have been extended by the topics afforded by the W. I.; the mother gains a renewed interest in home duties, and is enabled to give greater attention to some of those things that make for greater interest and happiness. Above all, a spirit of inquiry is being developed.

Mr. Putnam then gave a list of statistics pertaining to Institute work. Last year, he said, there was a membership of 13,841, with an attendance of 286,000. He did not see any reason why the local societies should not have an especial room of their own in each district, in which Institute literature and other helpful literature might be kept. Such a room might be used not only for meetings, but for social evenings, beside.

The W. I. has done considerable work in visiting schools and making suggestions to the trustees regarding the sanitary conditions and the beautifying of buildings and grounds. This is a work which might be indefinitely extended. A great field is also afforded by consideration of home sanitation, pure water supply, personal hygiene, architecture, and the tasteful furnishing of the home, as well as the great duties, the training of children and appointment of the rights and responsibilities of the different members of the home. During the past decade, over 1,000,000 immigrants have come to this coun-