

Parents," or "The Carpenter's Shop." The "Isabella" painted in 1849 is the finest of Millais' "Pre-Raphaelite" pictures. The finest, in fact, illustrating their special faith, by any of the "Brotherhood." As I remember the picture as I saw it some years ago, I have again the enthusiastic feeling roused by its splendid powers. That it is strange, curious, with its nervous intensity of purpose, one must admit; but its audacity, earnestness and uncompromising veracity, carry conviction with them. It has the supreme quality of imposing upon the observer the condition of the artist's mind, and establishing for the time being, a reciprocity of intellectual attitude. None of the other members of the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" were able to do so with such force. It may be just that touch of the practical, which Millais developed—overdeveloped later—which gave to his work of this period a certain inevitableness, a something of brutal—in the artistic sense—positiveness. We submit ourselves to the glamor of Rossetti without intellectual conviction, we feel that with Mr. Holman Hunt his combative insistence is often nearly akin to absurdity, latterly a hobby which has dulled his artistic judgment. But in the "Isabella" of Millais, we wonder if there is not a touch of atavism, in it we return to the sweetness, the naïveté, the curious and subtle selection, the boldness and delicacy of line of the fifteenth century. The "Lorenzo and Isabella" as it is sometimes called, of course, raised a whirlwind of abuse. A more remarkable and daring piece of composition has rarely been attempted. A double row of people seated at a low table running at right angles to the spectator, was an outrage upon all the properties of composition to people accustomed to the balance of Academic rule. The clever concentration of the drama in the principal figures is thrown into strong relief by the happy plan of making the subordinate figures calmly eating and drinking, with the stiff and somewhat formal primness of people at their superiors' table. The tones and colors are so carefully studied that it seems to me, with all its conscientious elaboration of detail, the picture, artist-

ically, as dramatically, is a consistent whole. The charm of delicate yet, brilliant color is added to magnificent draughtmanship. Lorenzo's head, I think, is forced beyond the necessary limit—the one weak point. We can almost sympathize with the irritation of the brothers, if he looked so woe-be-gone. Nevertheless, the "Isabella" is, as Mr. Holman Hunt says—and I take him as an authority—"The most wonderful painting that any youth under twenty ever did in the world."

The other important pictures of this period are "The Carpenter's Shop," the "Ferdinand and Ariel," and "Ophelia." They were all received by unmitigated and unintelligent abuse. But Ruskin, by this time, had taken up the defence of the movement, and sympathizers multiplied, though slowly. An interesting incident was the appreciation shown by the Directors of the Liverpool Academy; already familiarized as it was with the principles of the "school" by Ford Madox Brown. Several pictures by members of the "Brotherhood" were bought by the Directors which Ruskin declares to be "The first instance on record of the entirely just and beneficial working of the Academic system." But the final result was, that the opposing Philistines triumphed, and upon the purchase of Millais' "Blind Girl" the factions was so strongly opposed that the Academy resigned its charter. It is curious to note that the Walker Art Gallery of Liverpool now possesses Millais' "Isabella," as one of the priceless pictures of the collection.

For several years Milais was faithful to his youthful love. Still under its influence he painted the celebrated "Huguenot." But in it we feel that his grasp is loosening. He has still the manner of the "Pre-Raphaelite," but the spirit is lacking. There is a touch of conscious mannerism in it: a mannerism, I mean, as an end, not as a means; a feeling of a somewhat commonplace sentiment, dear to the popular heart, unfortunately rarely to be lacking in his subsequent compositions. The "Ophelia," of the same year seems to me, however, to once more reach the broader suggestiveness and adequacy of his earlier work.