

the world by the power of "truth." Broadly speaking, the aim of the Society of the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" as they called themselves, was "objective truth," as a necessity thereto a frank return to nature; in a word, a revolt against Academic formalism.

Of Millais' contributions to the Society's efforts, the greatest are the "Isabella and her Wicked Brothers," a subject taken from Keats' "Pot of Basil," and that called "Christ in the House of His 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 turn to the sweetness, the naivete, the curious and subtle se-

lection, 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 sitting at a low table running at right angles to the spectator, was an outrage upon all the proprieties 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 colours are so carefully studied that it seems to me, with all its conscientious elaboration of detail, the picture, artistically, as dramatically, is a consistent whole. The charm of delicate yet brilliant colour is added to magnificent draughtsmanship. 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-begone. 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 mem-