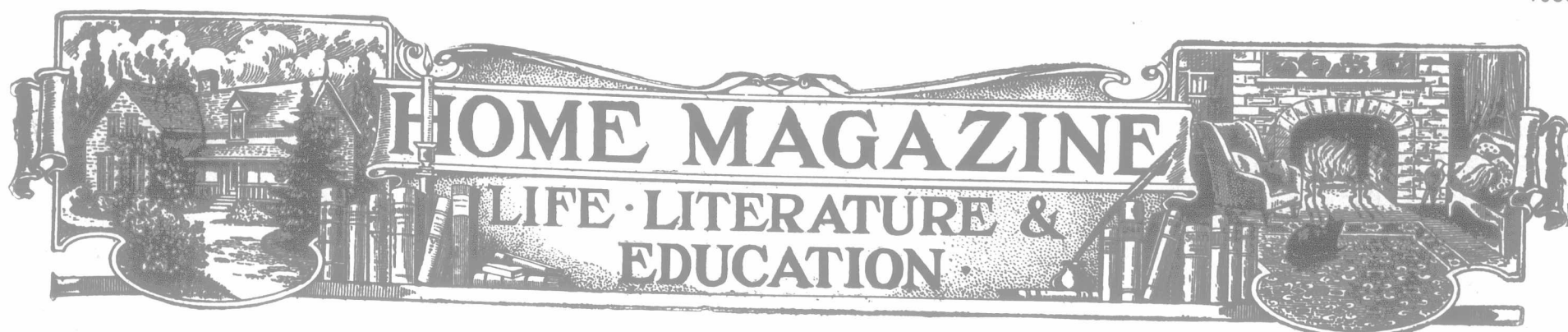
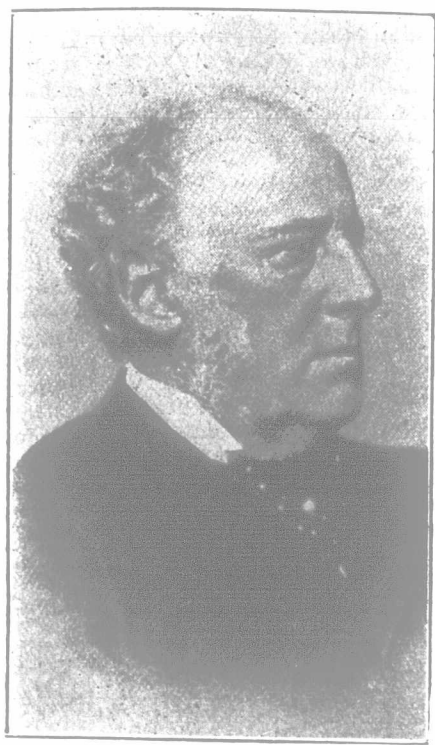




Little Trips among the Eminent.



Sir John Everett Millais.

Probably a number of our readers remember the two pictures, "My First Sermon," and "My Second Sermon," shown in the Art Gallery at the Toronto Exhibition of 1909. The pictures represented a charming little red-coated girl, in the first picture all alert as she looks upon a scene new to her; in the second, with head drooping, hat awry, sound asleep in the hard, straight-backed pew. Reproductions, you may remember, were afterwards published in the children's department of this journal.

We mention these pictures simply because they may be recalled by our readers. Charming though they are, and interesting because of the fact that they are portraits of the artist's own little daughter Effie, they are among the minor works of their author, the famous Sir John Everett Millais, usually considered the greatest of the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood," although some dispute this claim, giving preference to Holman Hunt.

However that may be—no doubt sentiment obtains largely in the matter—it is indisputable that Millais was by far the most successful, from a worldly point of view; indeed, he was one of the most successful artists of all time. From the beginning, he achieved attention and popularity. He knew little of the difficult path that usually winds, through long years of effort, before the feet of those who devote themselves to any of the arts; and although he fell, perforce, into the midst of the storm that, for a time, surrounded the "P. R. B.'s," it was but to emerge and pass on more triumphantly than ever.

Millais was born June 8th, 1829, at Southampton, England, where his parents were temporarily staying, but he spent his childhood chiefly at St. Helier's, on the Island of Jersey, where his ancestors, originally Normans, had been small land-owners since the time of William the Conqueror.

Like most other artists, the lad gave proof of talent at an early age. Even at four, he amused himself by drawing and coloring pictures of the butterflies and birds in the little valleys near St. Helier's. At the age of six, he astounded some soldiers at Dinan, Brittany (where his family lived for a short time) by a drawing of their drum-major in his gay uniform. They took him to their colonel, and the ensuing scene is not hard to imagine—the little lad of six, perched on a table before a delighted audience, busily drawing a lifelike sketch of the colonel himself smoking a cigar.

The colonel at once begged the lad's parents to see that he was given training, but it was not until three years later that the father submitted some drawings to Sir Martin Shee, President of the Royal Academy. Astonished, also, at the talent revealed, Sir Martin advised that the boy be sent to Art School at once, and accordingly he was taken to Sass's School, in Bloomsbury, where, before long, he succeeded in taking the silver medal of the Society of Arts. The Duke of Sussex, it is told, presided at the meeting at which the presentations were made, and, on calling out the name, "Mr. Millais," was much perplexed at seeing a bright-haired lad of nine advance. Inquiry, however, brought the information that the child was really the winner of the medal, and so it was presented, amid the acclamations of the audience.

A subsequent event, however, was not so happy. The bully of the school, jealous of the lad's success, hung him out of the window by the feet, and left him there till he was quite unconscious. Fortunately, a passer-by noticed him, and he was rescued.

For two years Millais remained at Sass's school, studying at times in the British Museum, but receiving no general education except that given by his mother. At the age of eleven he entered the Royal Academy, the youngest student ever admitted there, and during his six years in that institution won every prize he tried for, and finally (1847), the gold medal for historical painting, by a picture entitled, "The Tribe of Benjamin Seizing the Daughters of Shiloh." During the preceding year he had made his first appearance at the Academy exhibition by an ambitious "Pizarro Seizing the Inca of Peru," now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

While at the Academy, he was a general favorite. Beautiful, frank, genial, a prodigy in art, he excited the interest of all who saw him, and drew the hearts of his fellow-students to him. He was invariably called "The Boy," and it was not, during his earlier years there, an uncommon sight to see him carried up on the shoulders of some older boy to receive his prize.

Some burden of responsibility, however, fell early upon him. Means at home were somewhat limited, and in 1845 he undertook to copy pictures and paint in backgrounds for one Ralph Thomas, a picture dealer. So delighted was he with his first check, received from this firm, that he endorsed it with a pen-and-ink sketch of himself, seated at his easel. The check is still in existence in the hands of an admirer of Millais' work. The engagement with Thomas, however, did not last many years. The

dealer was imperious and unreasonable, and the young artist finally brought matters to an end by throwing a palette covered with wet paint at his head and leaving. He did no more work for Thomas, but managed to get enough commissions henceforth, not only to pay his own expenses, but to help materially in supporting the home.

In 1847 he painted an immense canvas, crowded with figures, "The Widow's Mite," in competition for some decorative work in the Parliament Buildings. The picture, however, was not accepted, and was afterwards cut in pieces.

The next year he joined with Hunt and Rossetti in the famous Pre-Raphaelite movement. All three, it will be remembered, had come under the influence of Ford Madox Brown in regard to the necessity of breaking away from the popular methods in art, in order that a chosen adherence to nature and truth might be obtained, and all three had fixed upon the artists preceding Raphael as those who approached most closely this ideal. Raphael, they considered, had achieved wonderful work, but had established methods and ideals which were not being reached by weaker men, to the degradation of art.

At the Academy of 1850, then, Millais' first "P. R. B." picture, "Christ in the Home of His Parents," was shown, and, with the other pictures of the "P. R. B.s," fiercely attacked. Three shown in 1851 met no better fate, and, like Hunt and Rossetti, Millais for a time found his work almost unsalable.

After Ruskin's championship, however, the outlook was better. Even before the storm had lulled, Millais was elected as an Associate of the Academy, one of the youngest ever chosen for that honor.

In 1852-53, working with redoubled zeal, he produced some important work, "Ophelia," "The Huguenot," "The Order of Release," and "The Proscribed Royalist." For "Ophelia," adapted from Shakespeare's "Hamlet," he chose for the painting the moment when the girl, who has cast herself into the stream, sings her death song in the brief moment when, upheld by the buoyancy of her clothes, she floats on the water. Millais, like all the "P. R. B.s," worked always from the model or landscape, as the case might be, and for this picture, Miss Siddal, afterwards the wife of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, posed, floating in a large bath, in which the water was kept at an even temperature by lamps placed underneath. One day, absorbed in his work, Millais failed to observe that the lamps had gone out, the water became chilled, and Miss Siddal caught a cold from which she became quite ill.

This picture, and "The Huguenot" established Millais' position as an artist. When "The Order of Release" was exhibited, it required a policeman to keep the crowd from crushing too densely to see it—the first time such a precaution was required for a picture. It represents a young woman with a sleeping child in her arms, standing beside her husband in a prison cell. He, in emotion, hides his face on her shoulder, while she holds out to the turnkey the order for her husband's release. A collie greets his master with a not less sincere delight. The picture sold at the time for £400. Many years

later it brought to its owner a substantial sum of \$25,000.

Mrs. Ruskin, by the way (who had been Miss Euphemia Chalmers Gray) posed for the woman in "The Order of Release." Afterwards, when she had obtained a decree of the nullity of her marriage with the great art-critic and writer, Millais married her. After their marriage, they went at once to Annat Lodge, near Bowerswell, and here "Autumn Leaves," described by Ruskin as "the first instance of a perfect twilight," was painted.

"The Black Brunswicker," for which Miss Kate Dickens posed as the woman, was painted in 1860, and was sold almost immediately for 1,000 guineas. Rapidly following, for Millais was an indefatigable worker, although he took regular holidays, usually with Thackeray, Dickens, Wilkie Collins, or Leech, the famous Punch illustrator—were completed a host of paintings, among which were "The White Cockade" (1862), "My First Sermon" and "My Second Sermon" (1863-64), "The Minuet," and the fine "Eve of St. Agnes," in 1867.

For some time, Millais, while keeping to his Pre-Raphaelite ideals in regard to truth and coloring, had been gradually forsaking the photographic detail of his earlier methods. In 1868 he threw this painstaking away to a great extent, and henceforth adopted broader methods.

Among the pictures that followed this resolution were "The Knight Errant," and "The Boyhood of Raleigh" (painted from his own sons, 1870), of which a reproduction will be given, nothing preventing, in our Christmas Number for this year.

Besides these figure studies, Millais also accomplished a mass of illustrating for Trollope, Tennyson and others. In 1871, his first pure landscape, "Chill October," appeared, followed by many other scenes by land and by sea, and in 1874 his famous "Northwest Passage," considered by many his greatest painting, was exhibited. The picture represented an old seaman (Trelawney, friend of Byron, sat as model) in a room filled with charts. Through the window may be seen a glint of the sea, and at the old man's feet sits a young girl, reading to him an account of far-away prowess in Arctic seas.

"The Yeoman of the Guard," closely disputing the place of "The Northwest Passage" for first place, was painted three years later, and in 1878 was completed "The Princes in the Tower," representing the two unhappy lads afterwards smothered by the order of the wicked Richard III., and painted from the two young sons of a former model. "The Princess Elizabeth" (1879) represents the hapless little daughter of Charles I., who spent half of her life of fifteen years in prison, and then died. The richly-carved wardrobe which appears in the background of this picture was painted by Millais from one that had actually belonged to Charles I., and to which the artist obtained access with no little trouble.

During 1879-88, Millais spent considerable time upon portraits, painting those of Gladstone, Bright, Cardinal Newman, Disraeli, Tennyson, and others. A fine portrait of Ruskin had been done some years before.

These last years, indeed, were filled with the making of many pictures, among them "Bubbles," the picture copied, to Millais' consternation, so extensively for advertising by the