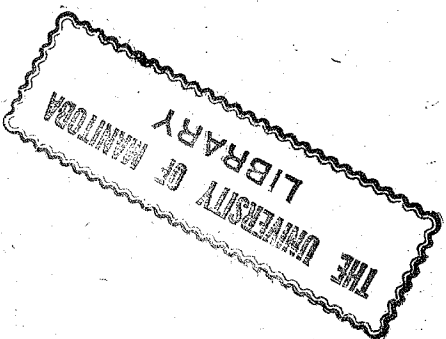


ROBERTI, JOHN PAINEER-FOWE

by

Ada Esther Turner, B. A.

Being a Thesis presented to the Department of
English in the University of Manitoba in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts.



May 1917.

1851
Thesis
Dep. Col.

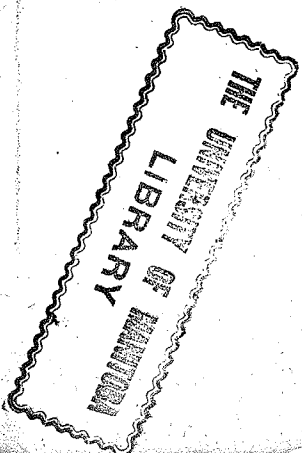
242

ROSSETTI - THE PAINTER-POET.

Intro. : Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites.

- (1) Sources and Influences
 - German and French Minstrelsy
 - Classics
 - Dante
 - Edgar Allen Poe
 - The Bible
 - Shakespeare
 - Miscellaneous
 - Tennyson
 - Wm. Bell Scott and Watts-Dunton
 - Browning
 - Coleridge
 - Shelley and Keats
- (2) Periods of His Work
 - The Simple
 - The Complex
- (3) Common Characteristics of His Poetry and Painting
 - Mysticism and Mediaevalism
 - Symbolism
 - Realism
 - Supernaturalism
 - Passion and Dramatic Force
 - Sensuousness
 - Melody
 - Nature
- (4) His Philosophy of Life : Treatment of
 - Religion
 - Politics
 - Love
 - Women

Conclusion : Influence of Rossetti.



Introduction- Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites.

In the case of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as in how few others, to adequately consider his writings one has to consider in what degree his mind worked consentaneously or diversely in two several arts, the art of poetry and the art of painting. But it is impossible to comprehend even in a slight degree his work in painting, and consequently in poetry also, without a knowledge of the work of the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

According to various points of view this organization was either the conscious expression of a great artistic revival deliberately planned by a body of zealots based upon a structure of lofty principles, or merely an irresponsible outburst on the part of a few impulsive youths linked together for one brief moment by a mutual combination of enthusiasm and high spirits. The truth, as usual, lies somewhere between.

It was an impulse in which expression, whether embodied in design, color, or verse, sought to free itself from traditional trammels and to make its appeal to the public by the light which shines from the lamp of simple truth and sincerity. In its impulse to be absolutely sincere this new artistic impulse went to the extreme of naivete and in its recourse to the forms and means of primitive and unsephisticated art, even earned for itself, and probably deserved, the

charge of affectation. For example, in "The Blessed Damsel"

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
 That living mystic tree
 Within whose secret growth the Dove
 Is sometimes felt to be,
 While every leaf that His plumes touch
 Saith His Name audibly."

These echoes of religious mysticism, of old-time balladry, of the drama in its rude beginnings carry us far back in thought to a period when art had not grown conscious of itself, back, in short, to times and ideals of mediaeval Europe. Sympathy with mediaeval mind and temper is the prevailing note of all this work.

As the term "Pre-Raphaelitism" came to be applied to more and more men and to a greater and greater variety of artistic productions it became even more hopelessly vague in its meaning than it had been at first, but it had evidently come to stay in the jargon of literary criticism. While the movement was like a grain of mustard seed from which a great tree sprung, the name chosen was a marvel of infelicity for the idol of the English art circles of this time was Raphael.

Pre-Raphaelitism.

"Raphael in his prime was an artist of most independent and daring course as to conventions. But he adopted his principle from the store of wisdom gained from long years

of toil, experiment, renunciation of used-up thought, and repeated efforts of artists, his immediate predecessors and contemporaries. The prodigality of his productiveness and his training of many assistants compelled him to lay down rules and manners of work; and his followers, even before they were left alone, accentuated his poses into postures. They caricatured the turns of his heads and the lines of his limbs so that figures were drawn in patterns; they twisted companies of men into pyramids and placed them like pieces on the chessboard of the foreground. The master himself at the last was not exempt from furnishing examples of such conventionalities."

The system of apprenticeship under which was produced all the great art of past ages had died out in the early days of the nineteenth century, perhaps as an inevitable sequence of the establishing of art academies. Serious penalties followed the change. The constant paternal training of the master training the inventive faculties of a particular student ceased to exist, and the latter could no longer see the original work of the master in all its stages, any more than the master could follow the student in his daily ambitious efforts.

Hunt says that after some hours spent in a modern gallery he felt pride welling up in him at the sensibility and skill

of many British artists of each season. But he increasingly felt that there could be no full satisfaction in merely carrying on his elder's ambitions which had become weakened in their dire struggle for existence in those straitened days by need of compromise with the prejudices of social taste. Artists had to work mainly on a sort of charitable sufferance from the rich who were not always more than fashionably refined. Constable prophesied that British art would disappear about 1852. He interpreted that this was fulfilled in the death of Turner, but young artists felt that if the open road led to an impassable waste they had to make a new way.

Hunt and Millais, working all one night to finish pictures, were discussing Raphael's cartoons. They did so fearlessly, but Hunt says, "Even when most daring we never forgot their charms to be honored. We advanced judgment on the 'Transfiguration'. We condemned it for its Grandiose disregard of the simplicity of truth, the pompous posturing of the apostles and the unspiritual attitudinizing of the Saviour. In our final estimation this picture was a signal step in the decadence of Italian art. When we had advanced this opinion to the other students, they as a reductio ad absurdum said, 'Then you are Pre-Raphaelite.' Referring to this as we worked side by side, Millais and I laughingly

agreed that this must be accepted."

Hunt, who was at this time working on his picture "Rienzi", put in practice the principle of the rejection of conventional dogma and pursued that of direct application to nature for each feature however humble a part of the foreground it might be. He says, "I justified the doing of this as the only sure means of eradicating the stereotyped tricks of decadent schools and of conventions not recommended by experienced personal judgment."

At this time Rossetti and Hunt were on terms of intimacy, and when Rossetti had seen the painting "Rienzi" his enthusiasm for the principles upon which Millais and Hunt were working grew with greater familiarity. Rossetti talked much with Woolner, explaining to him their resolution to turn more decidedly to nature as the one means of purifying modern art. Woolner declared it to be the only system that could reform sculpture. Hunt thus tells the story of the formation of the brotherhood: "The companionship of Rossetti and myself soon brought about a meeting with Millais at whose house one night we found a book of engravings of the frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa. It was probably the finding of this book at this special time which caused the establishing of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Millais, Rossetti and I were all seeking for some sure ground, some starting point for our art which would be secure however humble. As we searched them this book of engravings we found in them, or thought we found, that freedom from corruption, pride, and disease for which we sought. Here there was at least no trace of decline, no conventionality, no arrogance. Whatever