

Provost) Doyle—'Father Thomas'—the real builder of the Cathedral, a most attractive figure and surely the Prince of ecclesiastical beggars. Long extracts are given from his numerous letters to the *Tablet*, which treat, in a whimsical way, not merely of the church he was planning, begging for and, in due course, building, but of every conceivable topic of Catholic interest. It is here that we get so many valuable glimpses from the inside of Catholic life in its ordinary details, as lived in the middle years of the last century, of the liturgical and musical customs (did not the high-born and wealthy from Mayfair drive to St George's in their carriages to hear the celebrated choir perform the works of Haydn and Gounod?), of the many difficulties created by the prevalent anti-Catholic prejudice, of long-forgotten controversies and of much else. It would be easy to lengthen the list of people, events and topics we meet with in the course of this history, but enough has been said to show its great interest for the general reader and its importance for the student. There are several excellent illustrations, particularly interesting being those of Pugin's original designs for St George's. There is an index of persons and places, but the book would certainly be easier to consult as a work of reference if the principal topics dealt with had also been listed. Archbishop Amigo fittingly concludes his short introduction with the words: 'if only we have the same courage and self-sacrifice as that which animated him (Provost Doyle), St George's Cathedral will rise again in glory. God grant it!'

ANTONINUS FINILL, O.P.

THE MASTER OF MARY OF BURGUNDY. By Otto Pächt. (Faber; 21s.)

The uninitiated, turning over the seventy-six plates in this book, might regard them as undistinguished. After all the artist is a late fifteenth century illuminator, ranked, perhaps ambitiously, with Fouquet, and his art would seem to depend almost entirely on colour and on the relation of his work to the page and to the book; while there are only four coloured reproductions here, and many plates are 'details'. Yet as the uninitiated (and the author has in mind readers who are unacquainted with the work of this Master) reads the author's commentary the illustrations spring to life and are clothed suddenly with interest. He may be devoted to the primitives and unappreciative of this later art, but he will be won over by the interest inspired by the intriguing way of treating the plane of the page. Originally the page was on one plane; then the miniatures in the capitals introduced three dimensional space, and the border had to be elaborated in order to mediate between the space and the plane surface of the lettering. Finally this consummate artist, who had such a formative influence on the sixteenth century Flemish school, makes the border stand out from the page, so that the three distinct planes of border, lettering and miniature are skilfully related to make a whole. Among other things the art of 'still life' is wonderfully perfected in the borders where clarity and detail are essential.

All this and more is elaborated by the author with the help of his well chosen illustrations, and the book will interest many, particularly those who like to follow the evolution of art—for the author has made it possible to watch an otherwise very obscure section of the development of painting.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

PRE-RAPHAELITE PAINTERS. By Robin Ironside, with a Descriptive Catalogue by John Gere. (Phaidon Press; 25s.)

One could have wished that Mr Walter Sickert, who beheld the Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition of 1923 'with sensations only of excruciating boredom', could have lived to see the three Pre-Raphaelite Exhibitions of 1948. These commemorated the centenary of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's foundation. There are few left who were born and bred in the Pre-Raphaelite briar-patch, knew any of its seven founders, shared (even) the fervours of the Whitechapel Exhibition in the early nineteen hundreds and saw the last heirs of the movement eliminated by the first World War. Because Pre-Raphaelitism and landscape painting in water-colours are uniquely home-grown products, and because the former is the humaner contribution to life, the Phaidon Press's fine volume on Pre-Raphaelite Painters should be a cherished possession—not only in libraries, especially school libraries, but with art-lovers and social historians.

Mr Robin Ironside, in his interesting preliminary essay, rightly stresses the social significance of the movement which began as the highly personal venture of seven 'under twenty-fives'. Millais had entered the Royal Academy Schools at ten and won their gold medal at seventeen. His was the technical competence, Rossetti's the genius and Holman Hunt's the moral fervour: all three so powerful in conjunction—and they were not conjoined for long—so precarious in isolation. The Brotherhood was founded, over Lasinio's bad engravings of the Campo Santo frescoes at Pisa, at Millais's house in Gower Street in the autumn of 1848.<sup>1</sup> This fact Mr Ironside unaccountably omits, though the sight—even at such a disconcerting remove—of the so-called 'Orcagna' of 'The Triumph of Death' not only determined the name of the Brotherhood<sup>2</sup> but to a great extent the assemblage of 'talkative facts' which characterises their symbolism and their composition.

Mr Ironside takes well-rewarded pains to relate the movement to its background and to show the social impact of its secondary adherents Morris and Burne-Jones. But Pre-Raphaelite technique is extraordinarily interesting: and the primed white canvases often covered piece by piece like a fresco—sometimes with licks of colour into wet white—hold the secrets of an unrivalled vividness and durability—the high-keyed, passion-charged colour that Mr Ironside

<sup>1</sup> Holman Hunt to Ford Madox Hueffer. F.M.H.'s 'Rossetti', p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Madox Brown to Ford Madox Hueffer. 'Life' of M.B. by F.M.H.