Præraphaelite diaries and letters

Dante Gabriel Rossetti; Gabriele Rossetti; Ford Madox Brown

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PRÆRAPHAELITE DIARIES AND LETTERS

EDITED BY

WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI

I SOME EARLY CORRESPONDENCE OF DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI 1835-54

II MADOX BROWN'S DIARY ETC 1844-56

III THE P R B JOURNAL KEPT BY W M ROSSETTI 1849-53

ILLUSTRATED

J'ai voulu tout simplement puiser dans l'entière connaissance de la tradition le sentiment raisonné et indépendant de ma propre individualité--GUSTAVE COURBET 1855

LONDON

HURST AND BLACKETT LIMITED

13 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET
1900
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VARIOUS PERSONS
BELOVED OR CHERISHED BY ME
IN DEATH AS IN LIFE
STAND ON RECORD IN THIS BOOK
WHICH I DEDICATE
TO THE MEMORY OF THEM ALL

W M R

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Paris and Nice, for the sake of
her health. This triplicate had remained
in the possession of the Siddal
family until September 1899, when
her Brother was so good as to present
it to me ” 233

W. M. R.

INTRODUCTION.

Through the agency of various persons, myself not the least active, a considerable bulk of materials about the Præraphaelite Brotherhood, or P.R.B., has by this time been published. Some of these materials are in the nature of narratives or essays; others, of documents of old date--letters, diaries, and so on. I now offer to the public a further instalment of materials of the second class.

This instalment, as the reader will readily perceive, consists of three several things, not directly connected the one with the other, but all bearing upon the Præraphaelite movement. There is:--1. An early correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, beginning (for curiosity's sake) in April 1835, when he was not quite seven years of age, and going on to March or April 1854, just before the date when my compilation entitled _Ruskin, Rossetti, Præraphaelitism_ (1899) begins; and with this are included two letters from our Father. 2. Some letters from Ford Madox Brown to his first Wife, Elizabeth (Bromley), December 1844 to May 1845, followed by a much longer item, extracts from his Diary from 4th September 1847 to 6th January 1856: some passages from this Diary, relating to Dante Rossetti and

his surroundings, were given in my compilation above-named, and these are, of course, omitted here. 3. Extracts from the P.R.B. Journal, which I, as a member of the Brotherhood acting as its Secretary, kept from 15th May 1849 to 29th January 1853. Thus the entire range of dates in this volume is from April 1835 to January 1856; and from 1847 to 1856 it is tolerably detailed and copious.

It will be seen that the three constituent parts of this book overlap to a large extent. The most important of the three is--as I think most readers will say--the writing of Madox Brown. I have given the precedence to the Rossetti correspondence simply because it begins at the earlier date.

It seems superfluous for me to write any more here. My object in the present volume (as in one or more that have preceded it) is not to give any continuous narrative or dissertation of my own, but to set forth original documents, with such introductory or annotating matter as may make them plain. Matter of this sort is furnished in connexion with each of the three items which make up the book: and so I leave it in the reader's hands. He may perchance find it informing in some parts, and amusing in at any rate as many.

WM. M. ROSSETTI.

London. July 1899.

PRÆRAPHAELITE DIARIES AND LETTERS.

SOME EARLY CORRESPONDENCE OF DANTE

GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

SOME EARLY CORRESPONDENCE OF DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

In the course of some recent researches among old family documents I put together the enclosed specimens--consisting of twenty-four letters from Dante Gabriel Rossetti to various persons, 1835 to 1854, and of two letters addressed to him by his father, 1853.

I have more than once had occasion to confute a current misconception that Dante Rossetti could be adequately described as a sentimentalist, a dreamer, a mystic, an æsthete, and the like, without allowance being made for a considerable counterbalance of attributes of a very opposite character. Certainly he had some sentiment; he dreamed several dreams, asleep and awake; he may have been a mystic (though I never quite understood what a mystic is); and he had a passion for art in various forms, and for the word “art” we now often substitute the word “æsthetics”--a term which Rossetti seldom, if ever, pronounced. But it is not the less true that he was full of vigour and buoyancy, full of _élan_, well alive to the main chance, capable of enjoying the queer as well as the grave aspects of life, by no means behindhand in contributing his quota to the cause of high spirits--and generally a man equally natural and genial. In youth these qualities had not been overclouded by some troubles which beset his later years--although indeed, like other men, he had at all periods of life his troubles and his glooms. The present correspondence belongs all to the years of his youth; and I think readers will say that, whatever else Dante Rossetti may have been, he was a quick-blooded,

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