

BROWN (FORD MADOX).

B. 1821. D. 1893.

Ford Madox Brown was born on the 16th of April 1821 at Calais, where his father, Dr. John Brown, a retired commissary in the British Navy, had gone to live. Young Brown, even in early childhood, showed so much taste for drawing that his father, after removing to Bruges, placed him under the tuition of Albert Gregorius, a portrait painter, and sometime director of the Academy in that city. He subsequently studied under Van Hanselaer of Ghent, and finally entered the Academy at Antwerp, then directed by the leader of a new school of painting in Belgium, viz., Baron Wappers, from whom Brown derived valuable instruction in the technical practice of his art and the use of various mediums.

While still a pupil of this distinguished master, the young painter exhibited at a public gallery in Ghent his picture of "Job and his Friends," which attracted some notice.

In 1841 he sent to the Royal Academy another work entitled "The Giaour's Confession." About twelve months afterwards he removed to Paris, where he spent three years in drawing from the life and studying in the Louvre. During the competition organised about 50 years ago by the British Government with the object of procuring designs for decorating the Houses of Parliament, Brown sent two cartoons to the Exhibition held at Westminster Hall in 1844, and three fresco paintings in 1845.

After a short stay in Italy, where he had gone in the vain hope of restoring his first wife's health (she died in Paris on the way home), Brown came to settle in London, and occasionally exhibited at the Royal Academy. A difference with that body and his own artistic predilections might have led him to associate himself with that youthful band of painters who, under the title of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, at one time seemed likely to revolutionise pictorial taste in this country and form a new school of British Art. But Brown, though he took a great interest in the rising genius of Rossetti, and even instructed him in the technique of oil painting, in 1848 declined to be elected a Brother. He had always been a man of independent action and he continued to take his own course.

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