

Grimm's Life of Raphael. [*Das Leben Raphaels von Urbino.*
[Italiänischer Text von Vasari. Uebersetzung und Commentar
von Herman Grimm. Erster Theil.] Berlin: Dümmler.

HERMAN GRIMM'S contribution to Raphaellesque literature is an instalment of a larger work. It comprises Vasari's life of Raphael, turned, we know not why, into modern Italian by Professor Tobler, and the same text conveniently divided into chapters, reprinted in Italic fragments and commented at considerable length. Grimm's purpose seems to be, at some future period, to write a biography of Raphael for which these commentaries shall be a book of reference, enabling him to dispense with notes and tell his story without further interruption. His views and arguments will, he doubtless thinks, have been exhaustively put, and the reader will thus take the benefit of a continuous narrative which—we may surely predict—will have more than the usual attractions of Grimm's manner.

The questions which prominently arise as we read this first volume of commentary are important. Does Grimm exhaust the materials, artistic and literary, at his command, and does he make such use of them as will preclude the necessity of commenting his own commentary?

None who peruse this work with a previous knowledge of the subject will deny the vast reading, the comprehensive grasp of sources, and the subtlety with which conclusions are drawn. It is striking with what clearness problems of perplexing intricacy are treated; and it may be admitted that there is a natural plausibility even in the solutions from which we feel bound to dissent.

Nothing appears more interesting, in our opinion, than the short but telling essays in which Grimm, with the help of engravings and photographs, sketches the gradual transformation of Raphael's compositions, from their first imperfect conception to their final completion. We note in the course of these excursions a judicious and close criticism enlivened and adorned by sparkling lightness of style.

Guided by a casual observation of the Abbé du Bos which escaped earlier research, Grimm is enabled to name almost all the figures in the "School of Athens"; and it is probable that he might have gone further had he not been restrained by considerations which have since been ably combated by Scherer.* Sidonius Apollinaris and Marsilio Ficino's *Plato* are the true and only sources from which Raphael's literary friends derived the subject of the "School of Athens"; and it will be difficult for future writers to contend that this vast and noble composition contains a single figure connecting the philosophers of Greece with the apostles and fathers of the Christian faith. We think, indeed, that here it will be necessary for Grimm to surrender his position as a trimmer between two different schools and to assert a decided and final opinion of his own.

There is much again that commands attention in the parallel, frequently drawn, between Raphael and the heroes of the Tuscan schools of his time, Lionardo, Fra Bartolommeo, and Michael Angelo; for though here and there something might be brought forward to modify his views and bring his thoughts into a different channel, his opinions might be maintained with very little further expansion or modification.

On one or two questions of moment, it may be necessary to express the belief that Grimm will not be precluded from the necessity of making concessions, and we may be deliberately compelled to assert that it is impossible for a

* W. Scherer's *Ueber Raphael's Schule von Athen* (22 pages, Vienna, 1872) has an important complement to this volume of Grimm's commentaries.