



PDA-47329590

NSHD

OKQ -- Not available -- v.1-2

ACU AEU

Essays and remains of the Rev. Robert Alfred Vaughan / edited with a memoir
by the Rev. Robert Vaughan .

KALA B HIRTLE

NSHD Arts

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

DOCUMENT DELIVERY DAL11760

57 POPLAR DR

LANTZ, NS

ATTN:	SUBMITTED:	2010-09-01 23:17:56
PHONE: 902-883-8482	PRINTED:	2010-09-10 08:55:56
FAX:	REQUEST NO.:	PDA-47329590
E-MAIL:	SENT VIA:	World Wide Web
	PATRON TYPE:	Graduate

PDA	* REGULAR	COPY	BOOK
-----	-----------	------	------

AUTHOR:	Vaughan, Robert Alfred
TITLE:	ESSAYS AND REMAINS OF THE REV. ROBERT ALFRED VAUGHAN
PUBLISHER/PLACE:	John W. Parker & Son London
VOLUME/ISSUE/PAGES:	Vol. 2 333-37
DATE:	1858
AUTHOR OF ARTICLE:	??
TITLE OF ARTICLE:	??
OTHER NUMBERS/LETTERS:	OCLC: 8469603
DELIVERY:	E-mail Link: KL415396@DAL.CA
REPLY:	E-mail: KL415396@DAL.CA
ADDITIONAL NOTES:	Please send a copy of the requested pages. Thank you. NSHD, docdel@dal.ca

This document contains 5 pages. This is NOT an invoice.

Copies are made under ACCESS Canada license any resale or further copying
is prohibited.

Queries:-

docdel@dal.ca or 902-494-3612

Dalhousie Univ Libraries/ASIN Document Delivery /Novanet

Do not remove this cover sheet.
This copyright statement must be delivered to the end user with the attached article.

This single copy has been made at the request of the recipient for the purpose of research or private study only. It is not to be used for any other purpose or reproduced without the permission of the copyright owner.

AND/OR

This material has been copied under license from Access Copyright. Resale or further copying of this material is strictly prohibited.

Interlibrary Loans

Stauffer Library

Queens UNIVERSITY



Poems. By Matthew Arnold.

Nor a little of our modern poetry has trusted for success to luxuriance of fancy, to a multitude of individual beauties of thought and expression, rather than to grandeur of action or unity of purpose in the work taken as a whole. The principle of Mr. Arnold's poetry is a reaction against excess in this direction. He would have us retrace our steps towards the severer simplicity of Sophocles. Poems like those before us, and the 'Festus' of Mr. Bailey, stand at opposite extremes. The admirers of the former will be tempted to account Bailey's work a gorgeous incoherence—a mass of materials for poetry rather than a poem; while those who are enthusiastic for 'Festus' will complain of tanniness in Mr. Arnold, will object that the statuesque repose he covets is a conventionalism; that nature is complex, even grotesque, in her startling varieties of affluence—certainly not limited, like the Greek ideal. For our own part, we are catholic enough heartily to enjoy both. Mr. Arnold's preface does not convince us that he is right; but we like his poetry for all that. His poems abound in genuine felicities of expression, always rigorously subordinated to the dominant impression in view. 'Schraub and Rustum' is an epic 'adventure' which may worthily take rank not far beneath Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur', 'Tristan and Isolde' is unequal and faulty, according to the author's own canon, but redeemed by some descriptive passages of great excellence. The occasional pieces and the sonnets we think inferior. It is generally the cast of a writer's own temperament and culture that determines his theory, and Mr. Arnold is altogether objective. He succeeds best where he has to deal with action; and with all his admiration for the Greek drama, is least happy when lyrical, most so when following Homer. The best passages in the 'Strayed Reveller' are those which possess the same beauty for which the 'Forsaken Merman' is so remarkable—the power the poet has of identifying himself, and making us identify ourselves, with a certain phase or province of the external world. Whatever view he may take of the old quarrel

'Aurora Leigh.'

between classicist and romanticist, the reader of taste will find in this little volume of Mr. Arnold's very much that will give him pleasure.

'Aurora Leigh.'

THIS is a poem in nine books—some four hundred pages of blank verse, and yet not such that any reasonable person would wish it shorter. It tells a story of these nineteenth century days, with incidents and characters that might have furnished forth an ordinary three-volume novel. But Mrs. Browning, being a poetess, has thrown the materials of a tale which embodies the result of much reflection on some of the most anxious questions of our time, into the form most congenial to her nature. In her blank verse she has endeavoured to approach as nearly to the language of daily life as was possible without becoming prosaic or colloquial. The rhythm is free and varied, without any reflection of that classic stateliness so appropriate to the lofty theme of Milton. The conception of the poem as a whole is original, because natural—for originality is but nature—a genuine spontaneity. Living with broad and genial sympathies in these times, Mrs. Browning desires to speak of them and to them in her own chosen language. Hence the apparent incongruity of a modern novel in the form of an epic poem.

Goethe has represented in his *Tasso* the conflict between those antipathetic natures—the shrewd and polished diplomatist, the simple-minded and impulsive poet. In *Antonio* and in *Tasso* the real and the ideal are brought together in necessary hostility, while each is unable to apprehend the other. *Aurora Leigh* represents, in a province of its own, another form of that old hereditary feud between the imaginative mind and the practical, between the genius which creates in art and the talent which combines in administration. The antithesis of the poem is not so much that which exists between a worldly-wise conventionalism and the idealism of a poet; it depicts rather the inevitable divergence between the intellectual theorist who desires to elevate men by a superior external organization, and

the artist who believes that the best expression of his own truest culture will constitute his most serviceable contribution to the sum of general well-being. The difference here is not irreconcilable, and the poem does not close without indicating the ultimate harmony in which these rival forms of beneficence, or types of duty, may be combined.

Aurora has a cousin, Romney Leigh, who devotes life and fortune to schemes for social improvement. She, on the other hand, feels within her the stirring of the poetic gift. He sees only a vast sum of human misery, against which he is commissioned to fight. He looks down, discerning worms and corruption everywhere. She looks upward, and sees the sun and feels the summer time, and makes song and praise her service. But Aurora, too, is not free from an excess on her side. She is bent on attaining a position of her own above that commonly assigned to woman. She will be no mere subordinate help-meet in the work of any man, but achieve a task of her own, not inferior. His theories break to pieces when put in practice. She reaches the height of her ambition to find it barrenness, for she is not in her place; woman's happiness is not hers, and the heart's void is not filled. Then, at last, the two begin better to understand each other, and better to comprehend what is possible and what is duty for themselves. In their union that just medium is indicated which abstains, in the conduct of life, from excess of generalization on the one side, and excessive individualism on the other. The impatience which would attempt too much, and is for reforming all wrong at a stroke, receives its due lesson. Aurora refuses to join Romney Leigh in his schemes of Christian socialism. He rates lightly the art to which she turns—above all, that art as handled by a woman, incapable by nature of generalization. Women, he says, care nothing for the vast sum of misery, only for the individual sorrows visible within their home circle, or not beyond its reach. He says—

‘ Show me a tear
Wet as Cordelia’s, in eyes bright as yours,

Because the world is mad ! You cannot count
That you should weep for this account, not you !
You weep for what you know. A red-haired child,
Sick in a fever, if you touch him once,
Though but so little as with a finger tip,
Will set you weeping ; but a million sick—
You could as soon weep for the rule of three,
Or compound fractions. Therefore this same world,
Uncomprehended by you, must remain
Uninfluenced by you. Women as you are,
Mere women, personal and passionate,
You give us doting mothers and chaste wives,
Sublime Madonnas, and enduring saints,
We get no Christ from you ; and verily,
We shall not get a poet, in my mind.

In reply, Aurora, while she reverences duly the freedom of this generous theorist from personal aims, replies that his work is not the kind for her—he is married already to his social experiment—she too has a vocation. Men are greater than any of their competitors. The evil lies deeper than he thinks. The artist is still needed to keep up the open roads between the seen and unseen.

‘ A starved man
Exceeds a fat beast : we’ll not barter, sir,
The beautiful for barley. And, even so,
I hold you will not compass your poor ends
Of barley-feeding and material ease,
Without a poet’s individualism
To work your universal. It takes a soul
To move a body ; it takes a high-soul’d man
To move the masses—even to a cleaner stye.
It takes the ideal to blow a hair’s breadth off
The dust of the actual. Ah, your Fouriers failed,
Because not poets enough to understand
That life develops from within.’

So Romney Leigh acknowledges at last, and learns patience, and ceases toiling to carve the world anew after a ‘ pattern on his nail,’ and vexing his soul to abolish inequalities, and somehow serve out

to every man perfect virtue, and all sorts of comforts, 'gratuitously, with the soup at six.' He says in the end—

'Oh, cousin, let us be content, in work,
To do the thing we can, and not presume
To fret because it's little. 'I will employ
Seven men, they say, to make a perfect pin :
Who makes the head, content to miss the point ;
Who makes the point, agreed to leave the join ;
And if a man should cry, ' I want a pin,
And I must make it straightway, head and point,'
His wisdom is not worth the pin he wants.
Seven men to a pin—and not a man too much !
Seven generations, happy, to this world,
To right it visibly, a finger's breadth,
And mend its rents a little.'

This is sound philosophy—and the poem has many such wise and large-minded thoughts, vigorously expressed in felicitous and glowing language. Our generation scarcely numbers more than one or two among its master-minds from whom we could have looked for a production at all to rival this in comprehensiveness—a poem with so much genuine depth, and so free from obscurity. The results of abstract thinking are here, and yet there is no heavy philosophising of set purpose. A warm human life meets us everywhere. There are no broad levels of prosaic reflection, such as sometimes test the patience even of true Wordsworthians. Men and women are introduced who learn philosophy by actual life, instead of those fair but hazy phantoms which alure and disappoint us in many of the philosophical poems of Schiller. Very difficult is the task undertaken. To have succeeded so well is high praise. Some years ago the same writer would certainly have failed in great measure.

The poem contains many descriptive passages of great power or beauty, such for example as the sketches of English rural scenery as compared with the Italian—sunset in London—the scene in the church on the day of Romney's wedding—the fall of Leigh Hall, and others. The love of Marian for her child is rendered with a

force and pathos that will come home to many mothers' hearts. The flight of a girl whose depraved mother would have sold her to the squire, is thus vigorously painted—

'The child turned round,
And looked up pigeons in the mother's face,
(Be sure that mother's deathbed will not want
Another devil to damn, than such a look.)
'Oh, mother !' then, with desperate glance to heaven,
'God, free me from my mother !' she shrieked out,
'These mothers are too dreadful.' And, with force
As passionate as fear, she tore her hands
Like lilies from the rocks, from hers and his,
And sprang down, bounded headlong down the steep,
Away from both—away, if possible,
As far as God—away ! They yelled at her,
As famished hounds at a hare. She heard them yell.
She felt her name hiss after her from the hills,
Like shot from guns. Oh, on. And now she had cast
The voices off with the uplands. Oh. Mad fear
Was running in her feet and killing the ground ;
The white roads curled as if she burnt them up,
The green fields melted, wayside trees fell back
To make room for her. Then, her head grew vexed—
Trees, fields, turned on her, and ran after her ;
She heard the quick pants of the hills behind,
Their keen air pricked her neck. She had lost her feet,
Could run no more, yet, somehow, went as fast—
The horizon, red 'twixt steeples in the east,
So sucked her forward, forward, while her heart
Kept swelling, swelling, till it swelled so big
It seemed to fill her body ; then it burst,
And overflowed the world, and swamped the light.
'And now I am dead and safe,' thought Marian Earle—
She had dropped—she had fainted.

If the plot of this tale had been developed in a prose fiction, some objections might have been urged on the score of probability. But we are not sure that the demand should be pressed so rigorously on a poem. The speeches uttered in the dialogues are sometimes so

long as to lose almost wholly the conversational character, and yet it cannot be denied that they are in spirit dramatic, inasmuch as each is made to arise out of what had gone before, and is such as belongs to the character who gives it utterance. The story of many poems is simply a slender thread on which to hang imagery, descriptions, and reflection, and is encumbered out of all measure by its adornments. In this instance the story itself (as in the poems of Scott) assumes a prominent interest, and while all mere ornament is subordinated, is told clearly and well, yet so imaginatively that the reader can never think to himself—'All this would have been better said in prose.'

'Craigcrook Castle.'

Mr. Massey's first volume of poems was received with general favour by the critics; and this, his second, gives abundant evidence that their auguries were not fallacious as regards the reality of his genius, nor their praise in any way injurious to its culture. We shall proceed to give an account of this little book, believing some information as to its contents more likely than a few sentences of general criticism to induce our readers to make acquaintance with it for themselves. First of all, there is a description of Craigcrook Castle, with 'its tiny town of towers,' its famous roses, and the region round about. To these roses, by the way, certain stanzas are addressed farther on, whose only fault is one which it would be scarcely fair to lay at Mr. Massey's door. Lovely are the roses: graceful are the verses; but what art could make 'Craigcrook' sound pleasantly in song? The recurrence of that word in every stanza is as the grating of a coffee-mill amidst sweet harping. There are some vigorous passages in the description of the guests at the Castle, their employments, and how they agree to sing or say, in turn, each somewhat that shall crown the glorious summer-day they celebrate.

The first poem, entitled 'The Mother's Idol broken,' consists of occasional pieces suggested by the death of a child. Very touching

'Craigcrook Castle.'

are some of these ejaculations and laments—these yearning, wistful cries after the lost little one—these echoes of the dear child-life, now silent in the grave. Many thoughts and lines here are divining-rods that find out the hidden spring of tears, and make us look heavenward, whither some precious one hath gone before. The following passages, for example, are so beautiful, because so true—no poetic expression or vesture, merely—but drawn from the depths of our common humanity.

'This is a curl of our poor 'Splendid's' hair!
A sunny burst of rare and ripe young gold—
A ring of *smiles* gold that *weds* two worlds!

Again:—

'There is her nest where in beauty smiled
Our babe, as we leaned above;
And her pleading face asked for the tenderest place
In all our world of love.
Very silent and empty now! yet we feel
It rock; and a tiny footfall
Comes over the floor in the thrilling night-hush,
And our hearts leap up for the call
Of our pair wee lammië dead and gone;
Our bonnie wee lammië dead and gone.'

We have not space for more quotation from this part of the book, but we are much mistaken if there are not many who will prefer it to all the rest. We have seen those who seldom read a line of poetry, and to whom 'Balder' seemed a prophecy in a tongue uninterpreted, who were melted by the pathos of Mr. Dobell's 'England in Time of War.' So while the lovers of poetry and the students of art rejoice in the 'Bridgroom of Beauty,' or such a poem as 'Only a Dream,' the mother will turn to the plaintive utterances of bereavement, and feel that her grief has found words. And what truer test or higher tribute could either poet seek or find? For what is Poetry but Truth with her singing-ropes about her?

Next follows 'Lady Laura,' a tale in short cantos of various measure, wherein the lady, cast out by falsehood from her broad