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Mr. Schott of the United States Coast Survey has contributed a map of the isothermal lines for each month of the year from Dr. Kane's observations, and those made at other places, based on Dove's isothermal charts. He ought to have given what would have been more instructive, the annual curves. Although Rensselaer Harbor, where the observations were made, is nearly four degrees farther north than McIvillie Island, yet its distance from the cold meridian ought to have given it a greater mean temperature. The concavity of the isothermal curves of more southern localities in the same meridian justify us in expecting such a result, and we have no doubt that some sufficient cause, arising either from the spirit-of-wine thermometers, or the method of observing them, may yet be found to account for the high temperature at Rensselaer Harbor. This suspicion is confirmed by the anomalous low temperature of the month of March 1854, namely—38°, which in the preceding table is reduced to —30°, in consequence of using for the mean temperature—38°.97 of the same month for 1853. In almost every latitude, and in that of Prince Patrick and McIvillie Islands, March is the first month of spring, and warmer than February, whereas in Dr. Kane's table it is the last and the coldest month, as a fact which we cannot hardly admit, in opposition to the general character of the isothermal curves.

The magnetic observations were made with an unifilar magnetometer belonging to the United States Survey, and a dip circle was also employed, at the instance of General Sabine. The following observations were made on the variation and dip of the needle:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>Dip</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 16th, 1854</td>
<td>10° 21' E</td>
<td>8° 38'</td>
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<td>New York</td>
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<td>Winter Harbour</td>
<td>8° 48'</td>
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The most important and interesting result of the expedition is the discovery of an open sea at the northern extremity of Smith's Sound, a phenomenon which had long before been rendered probable by the form of the isothermal lines, and by the law of temperature in the meridian of the west of Europe. In Mr. Morton's northern journey, after he had been travelling over a solid area, chock'd with berge and frozen fields, he was startled by the growing weakness of the ice. It became so rotten at its surface, and the snow so wet and pulpy, that his dogs, seized with terror, refused to advance. Upon landing on a new coast, and continuing his journey, he found himself on the shores of a channel so open that a fleet of frigates might have navigated it. As he travelled southward it expanded into an "iceless area," the extent of which he estimated at upwards of 4000 square miles. Animal life burst upon them as they went. Flocks of the Brent goose, the eider, the king-duck, and the swallow, indicated a new climate, and as he advanced the Arctic petrel was observed. The seal was not seen, and we make no remark upon the termination of his journey, he could not see "a speck of ice," and from an altitude of 490 feet, which commanded a horizon of nearly 40 miles, his eyes were gladdened with the prospect of a new world, he set hastily to work, and of a surf dashing over the rocks at his feet and staying his further progress. "This mysterious fluidity," as Dr. Kane observes, "in the midst (or rather at the end) of vast plains of solid ice, was well calculated to arouse emotions of the highest order, and there was not a man among us who did not long for the means of embarking upon its bright and lonely waters."

The discovery of the traces of Sir John Franklin and his party by Rae have led to a general belief that the whole of them have perished. Such a conclusion is certainly not justified by the facts in our possession, and with the aid of Mr. Schott and his chart, we have no doubt that we could have given it a greater mean temperature. Flocks of the Brent goose, the eider, the king-duck, and the swallow, indicated a new climate, and as he advanced the Arctic petrel was observed. The seal was not seen, and we make no remark upon the termination of his journey, he could not see "a speck of ice," and from an altitude of 490 feet, which commanded a horizon of nearly 40 miles, his eyes were gladdened with the prospect of a new world, he set hastily to work, and of a surf dashing over the rocks at his feet and staying his further progress. "This mysterious fluidity," as Dr. Kane observes, "in the midst (or rather at the end) of vast plains of solid ice, was well calculated to arouse emotions of the highest order, and there was not a man among us who did not long for the means of embarking upon its bright and lonely waters."

The poetic reputation of Mrs. Browning, late Miss Barrett, has been growing slowly, until it has reached a height which has never been before attained by any modern poetess, though several others have had wider circles of readers. An intellect of a very unusual order has been ripened by an education scarcely less useful for a woman; and Mrs. Browning now honourably enjoys the title of poetess in her own right, and not merely by courtesy. The poems before us are divisible into these tolerably distinct classes; first, the imaginative compositions, which form the bulk of Miss Barrett's poems, and several of which Mrs. Browning tells us she "would willingly have withdrawn; if it were not almost impossible to extricate what has once been caught and involved in the machinery of the press." Secondly, the poems which have immediately arisen from personal feeling and personal observation. Of these the chief are the so-called "Sonnets from the Portuguese," and "Casa Guidi Windows."

Thirldly, the novel-in-verse, or present-day epic, called "Aurora Leigh." Besides the poems belonging to these three classes, there are several "occasional pieces" of more or less significance.

Pieces which the author confesses that she "would willingly have withdrawn," are, by that confession, almost withdrawn from criticism. We imagine that the two dramas, "The Drama of Equinoctial" and "The Sorrows," are among the number of those which Mrs. Browning, in her last edition, introduces with "a request to the generous reader that he may use their weakness, which no subsequence of criticism or reputation has sufficed to expunge, less as a reproach to the writer, than as a means of marking some progress in her other attempts." We will only say concerning these and some other useful essays, that we know not of a single critic who has not been sufficiently impressed by them. It is of a kind which her personal friends will appreciate much better than the world, for whom, we presume, she writes and publishes.

Dismissing the whole of the first volume of "Poems," as containing very little that is worthy of the authoress's natural powers—although much that would be remarkable in any other recent poetess—we come, in the early part of the second volume, to the most beautiful pieces, "Bertha Barrett's Poems," which form the most beautiful pieces, "Bertha Barrett's Poems," which form the whole of the first volume, and in the presentation of which the author confidently looks with delight and satisfaction. The title of poetess in her own right, and not merely by courtesy. The poems before us are divisible into these tolerably distinct classes; first, the imaginative compositions, which form the bulk of Miss Barrett's poems, and several of which Mrs. Browning tells us she "would willingly have withdrawn; if it were not almost impossible to extricate what has once been caught and involved in the machinery of the press." Secondly, the poems which have immediately arisen from personal feeling and personal observation. Of these the chief are the so-called "Sonnets from the Portuguese," and "Casa Guidi Windows."
Mrs. Browning's Poets.

The piece that follows "Bertha in the Lane" is one which is a favourite, we believe, with many of Mrs. Browning's admirers. We cannot say that it is so with us; for, although noble and sublime in lines, and a current of true passion runs through the whole, it appears to us to be fundamentally damaged by the social fallacy—a very common one with novelists and poets. We refer to that of Mrs. Browning—upon which it is built. "Lady Geraldine's Courtship; A Romance of the Age," is the story of a peasant-poor's love, told by himself. He tells us that, although he was "Quite low-born, self-educated," yet, "because he was a poet, and because the public praised him," "he could sit at rich men's tables." At these he had an opportunity of seeing, and of falling in love with, "an Earl's daughter," which was not wonderful, or out of course; but that she should have fallen in love with and married him is, and we will venture to add, ought to be so. The more one knows of men and women, the less one thinks of the wisdom and possibility of happiness in a marriage of this kind; and the case is not made a whit the worse of these volumes which would bear a higher title to have shown that the Lady was not only of all poetical qualities. To write a good line is, and a current of true passion runs so good as Mrs. Browning might have made it.

The piece that follows "Bertha in the Lane" is one which is a "favourite, we believe," but the verse is more than usually rich in doctrine and classical allusion as the following:

"Jesus, Victim, comprehending
Love's divine self-abnegation,
Cleanse my love in its self-spending,
And add the price of pardon!
Wield my thread of life up higher,
Up, through angel's hands of fire!
I aspire while I aspire."

Mrs. Browning's worst fault is her almost constant endeavour to be "striking." This tendency has deformed her volumes with scores of passages so cruelly offensive to true taste that they are only still bad in themselves, but, being as it were, the hypocrisy of art, they cast suspicion and discredit upon their context wherever they occur. They are proof positive of absence of true feeling—of the tone of mind that "voluntary moves harmonious numbers"—at the time of writing; and the only poem of Mrs. Browning's from which they are almost entirely absent, is the series of "Sonnets from the Portuguese," the originals of which we fancy that we must seek in vain, unless we detect them in the personal feelings of the writer. In this series of sonnets we have unquestionably one of Mrs. Browning's most beautiful and worthy productions. In style they are openly, indeed, by the title avowedly—an imitation of the fourteenth and fifteenth century love-poetry; but to imitate this is so nearly equivalent to imitating nature of the simplest and loftiest kind, that it is scarcely to be spoken of as a defect of originality. The forty-four sonnets constitute consecutive stanzas of what is properly speaking one poem. They are lofty, simple, and passionate—not at all the least passionate for being high-toned and unheroic country, and the sincerity with which they are related, as indicating her own good faith and freedom from petulance.

"Casal Guidi Windows" is one of the very few things that have been lately written about the political condition of Italy in a tone with which, upon the whole, a sensible man may sympathize. Mrs. Browning says in her poem that it "contains the impressions of the writer upon events in Tuscany, of which she was a witness." From a window, the critic may demur. She bows to the objection in the very title of her work. No continuous narrative nor exposition of political philosophy is attempted by her. It is a simple story of personal impressions, whose only value is the intensity with which they were received, as proving her warm affection for a beautiful and unfortunate country, and the sincerity with which they are related, as indicating her own good faith and freedom from petulance.

"Casal Guidi Windows" is, to our thinking, the masterpiece of its author's performances. ist is not the highest. The difficulty of the metre, in which every rhyme occurs twice, here as in the sonnet, seems to act as a restraint upon the author's imagination, preventing it from indulging in that kind of flight of which boldness may be said to be the only recommendation. So difficult a metre is furthermore in itself a kind of compulsory finish which is a great advantage to the verses of a writer evidently not much given to the drudgery of polish, where it may be shirked. It has been said of the poet, that he

"Freely sings
In strictest bonds of rhyme and rule,
And finds in them, not bonds, but wings."
Mrs. Browning’s Poems.

And this is more than usually true of Mrs. Browning. Her genius nowhere rises in so spirited a style, or maintains so steady an altitude, as in those poems in which she submits herself to the heaviest fetters of external form; whereas in blank verse, and in other measures, not sufficiently weighted with rule, her imagination pitched like a kite without a tail.

Of the two parts of “Casa Guidi Windows,” says Mrs. Browning, writing in 1851, “the first was written nearly three years ago,” (1848), while the second resumes the actual situation. The first is full of hope, pardonably felt and finely expressed, for the immediate future of Italy. In this part there is little or no action. It is all aspiration mingled, however, with moderation and shrewdness. In her preface she congratulates herself on not having caught the “epidemic enthusiasm for Pio Nono.” In Part II, we find the causes which prevented the Po from fulfilling the hopes admirably shown, and in Part II, we find no less exactly and candidly stated the causes of the people’s falling in the hour of their opportunity. Our limits do not permit of lengthened extracts. We give the return of the Grand Duke Leopold, as one of Mrs. Browning’s highest achievements:

“I saw and witnessed how the Duke came back. The regular tramp of horse and tread of men did strike the silence of the night in full strain. And sparkling. With her wide eyes at full strain, Our Tuscan nurse exclaimed, ‘Alack, Alack, She is not the Greek nor the Australian.’ ‘Nay, Be still,’ I answered: ‘Do not wake the child!’ For so, my two-months’ baby sleeping lay In milky dreams upon the bed, and smiled, With Austrie thousands, sword and bayonet, most mature of her works; the one into Aurora Leigh; the other into Casa Guidi, Windows, and in the Sonnets from the Portuguese, a novel of the modern didactic species, written chiefly for the advocacy of distinct convictions upon Life and Art.”

“Aurora Leigh” is the latest, and Mrs. Browning tells us, in the dedication, “the most mature” of her works; the one into which her “highest convictions upon Life and Art have entered.” It was not well judged to prejudice the reader, at the very outset, by saying that it is a novel rather than poetry. Mrs. Browning attempted nothing but what she was perfectly competent to perform, and therefore they were better poems than others which may contain a great deal more poetry. “Aurora Leigh” was an austere Englishman, who, after a dry life, spent at home in college-learning, law and medicine, and made the “austere Englishman” into a man of sentiment.

Mr. Leigh gained the hand of the fair Florentine, and Aurora was born; but before the child was four years old, her mother died, having changed the nature of her husband, and made him mad, alike by life and death, and made him mad, alike by love and duty.

And faces, held as steadfast as their swords.

And cognizant of acts so imagiery.

The key, O Tuscan, too full to the wants!

’Twas asked for mines—these bring you tragedies.

For purple—these shall wear it as your lord’s.

“Casa Guidi Windows,” we repeat, is the happiest of Mrs. Browning’s performances, because it makes no pretensions to high artistic character, and is really “a simple story of personal impressions.” The poet, if not any other workman, has to do, is to find out what he is well able to do; and he should always determine to do a little less than he is able, in order that his limitations may not appear. There is no knowing how much a poet may do who has nothing he has attempted ill; and it is a great point in art, as well as in worldly prosperity, not to let your neighbours know the figure of your fortune.

And this as much for their sakes as for yours. All good art is the very best thing in its way. Now, the closest, most thoroughbred art of any sort that ever was done or ever will be done; and the best, in whatever way, is related to the best in all things, and has its aspect towards the Infinite in all directions. Now, this lovely freedom on the face of art seems to be contradicted by any appearance of strain and insufficiency. A dead wall—though it were the wall of China—is a bad background for any landscape. It is the misfortune of all our living poets that the dead wall of their limitations is the most conspicuous feature in their picture. This is because they take in more ground than their talents give them a title to. In “Casa Guidi Windows,” and in the “Sonnets from the Portuguese,” Mrs. Browning attempted nothing but what she was perfectly competent to perform, and therefore they were better poems than others which may contain a great deal more poetry.

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In Santa Croce to her memory.

“I saw and witnessed how the Duke came back. The regular tramp of horse and tread of men did strike the silence of the night in full strain. And sparkling. With her wide eyes at full strain, Our Tuscan nurse exclaimed, ‘Alack, Alack, She is not the Greek nor the Australian.’ ‘Nay, Be still,’ I answered: ‘Do not wake the child!’ For so, my two-months’ baby sleeping lay In milky dreams upon the bed, and smiled, With Austrie thousands, sword and bayonet, most mature of her works; the one into Aurora Leigh; the other into Casa Guidi, Windows, and in the Sonnets from the Portuguese, a novel of the modern didactic species, written chiefly for the advocacy of distinct convictions upon Life and Art.”

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Mrs. Browning's Poems.

Feb.

not, or rather could not, crown her, seeing
that she was a poetess only in secret, she
took a sudden fancy to crown herself; and
after hesitating between bay, myrtle, ver-
bena, and guelder roses, she turned to a
wreath of ivy, and twisted it round her
head. At this moment she beheld her
cousin beside her,

"With a mouth
Twice greater than his eyes."

Romney had found her manuscript poems, with
"Gracious upon the margin." A con-
version ensues on the subjects of art and
philanthropy, the cousins espousing dif-
sent sides. The burden of Aurora's argu-
ment was this:

"You will not compass your poor ends
Of barley feeding and material ease
To work your universal. It takes a soul
To move the masses—even to a cleaner sty:
It takes the ideal, to blow an inch inside
The dust of the actual: and your Fouriers failed,
Because not poets enough to understand
That life develops from within."
And, as she eloquently says, in another
place:

"the thrushes sang
And shook my pulses and the dim new leaves,
And then I turned, and held my finger up:
And bade him spring in the world, to the
world,
Went ill, as he related, certainly
The thrushes still sang in it—At which word
His brow would soften, and he bore me with
me in an ungracious patience, not unkind,
While breaking into volatile ecstasy,
I flattered all the beautiful country round,
As poet's ease, the skies, the fields,
The happy violets, hiding from the roads
The primroses run down to, carrying gold,
The tangled hedgerows, where the cows push out
Their tolerant horns, and patient chewing mouths
Twice dripping sah boughs, hedgerows alive,
With birds, and grates, and large white butterflies,
Which look as if the sun's then had caught life
And palpitated forth upon the wind,
Hills, vales, woods, nestled in a silver mist;
Pars, grassing among the hills,
And cattle grazing in the watered vales,
And cottage chimney's smoking from the woods,
And cottage gardens smiling everywhere,
Confused with smell of oil and earth.
"See, I said,
"And see, is God not with us on the earth?
And shall we put Him down by aught we do?
Who says there's nothing for the poor and vile,
Save poverty and wickedness? behold!"
And ankle-deep in English grass I leaped,
And clapped my hands, and called all very fair.

The burden of Romney's argument was
that women write at best but such poetry as
for male's; that poetry, unless of the very best,
is frivoulous work; that there is earnest work
to do, for him to do, and for her to do, if
she will become his helper and his wife.
The young poetess, indignat at being
sought as a mere helpmate, refuses the offer.
Her aunt, on hearing of Romney's offer and
rejection, expresses great grief, and tells
Aurora that she will inherit no money, all
her father's and all her aunt's being set off on
Romney, by a clause in a former deed, ex-
cluding offspring by a foreign wife. She
was told, further, that Romney's father had
wished that the cousins should marry; in
order to regain this, she concluded that her
father had known and approved the wish,
all of which strengthened Aurora in her
 determination to adhere to her refusal.
Soon after this, the aunt was found dead
by her bedside, with an unopened letter in
her hand. On the reading of the will, it was
found that she had left Aurora three hun-
dred pounds, "and all other monies of which
she died possessed." Romney, who, as heir,
attended the funeral, told Aurora that the
old lady died possessed of £20,000, of which
no mention was made in the will; but
Aurora, suspecting that her cousin was by
some means bestowing upon her this money,
insisted on seeing deeds to prove her aunt's
possession of it. A little inquiry showed
that Romney had presented this sum to his
aunt, and that the unopened letter found in
her hand, contained the deed of gift, which,
though made, had never been accepted.
Aurora tore the deed in shreds and went to
live in London.

Seven years later, we find her an estab-
ilished authoress, with piles of literary let-
ters; solitary and poor, hard-worked, but
uncomplaining. She had, in fact, made a
stranger enters, and announces herself as Lady Waldenar.
With little prelude, she declared herself to
be a widow, and in love with Romney
Leigh. She told Aurora that her cousin
was on the point of espousing a beggar's
daughter from these, Gilse's, and asked her
help in breaking off, or at any rate, post-
poneing the marriage. Aurora ascertained
that Lady Waldenar was commissioned by
Romney to tell her the news, and introduce
her to his lady-love, to get her consent
ances to the marriage, which marriage Lady
Waldenar to him appeared to approve and
promote. She would have nothing to
say to this double dealing, on the part of
Lady Waldenar, to whom she plainly says
Aurora then hastened to St. Margaret's Court,
to see the woman whom her cousin was to
marry. "An ineffable face" met her on the
threshold of a wretched room, and being

"You cheer him on
As if the worst could happen, and to
pigeon, To serve King David? Who discerns at once
the man
"What navigable river joins itself '
To Lara, and what census of the year five
Was taken at Klagenfurt."
The marriage-day arrived, and

The congregation assembled early, and chatted long, expecting the bride, but she came not; and at the last moment, a letter is delivered to Romney in Marian's hand. In this letter, Marian states her conviction that she best shows her love to Romney by saving him the unhappiness that must follow a union with her:

"It would be dreadful for a friend of yours..."

She hints at there being some one else whom Romney loves:

"You might say, or think, (that worse.) There's some one in the house...

He then goes on to say she shall go where no one can find her:

"I never could be happy as your wife,—
I never could be harmless as your friend:
I never will look as if I was to your face
Till God says 'Look.'—I charge you seek me not,
Nor vex yourself with lamentable thoughts
That, peradventure, I am come to grief!
Be sure I'm well, I'm merry, I'm at ease!
But such a long way, long way, long way off,
I think you'll find me sooner in my grave."

In explicable as the mystery was to Romney, it was still more so to the congregation of St. Giles's who did not read the letter, and were too much exasperated at their missed triumph to listen to Romney, who wished to address them. "Full him down, strike him, kill him!" was called out from the crowd, some of whom suggested he should play on the part of the bridegroom; and it was not till the police were called in, that the church could be cleared and order restored.

Romney made long search for Marian, but could find no trace of her. He then left London, and Aurora again lost sight of him. On his return to the country, Romney became more than ever engrossed in his schemes of philanthropy. He turned his family seat into a Philanthropy, and devoted himself to the reformation of the thieves and poachers, who took up their abode there.

Aurora now wrote a great poem, in which, after long reading dissatisfied with her productions; she at last had a consciousness of having in some degree conveyed in words, the things she had thought and felt. She went soon after to a party, and refused an offer from a man of birth and fortune, and heard that Romney was engaged to Lady Waldemar. Almost immediately after this, she left her nurse with a publisher, and set out for Florence.

On her way, Aurora was detained a few days in Paris; and walking one day in the flower market, she met Marian Erle. Marian had thought it would gladly avoid Aurora, but Aurora persists in going to her home, and succeeds at last in learning the mystery of Marian's flight and present condition.

Lady Waldemar had often been to her, and had contrived to make her believe that misery would follow her marriage with Romney; that Romney had loved her, Lady Waldemar, and she him; that his offer to her was prompted by principle only, and would be followed up in a spirit of martyrdom. Lady Waldemar then offered to send her in the charge of a respectable person, who had formerly been her maid, to Australia. Marian gladly accepted the offer, and went with the woman, who, instead of taking her to Australia, had brought her to an infamous house in Paris, where drugs and force were used to accomplish her ruin.

She had fled from this place in delirium, was taken in by a farmer's wife; obtained employment, and lost it on his appearing that she was about to become a mother; and had, since then, supported herself and her child, now a year old, by needlework.

Aurora took both mother and child to her own home; and after long debate, wrote two letters, one to a mutual friend of her's and Romney's, telling him all, and asking him only to communicate this story to her cousin should he not be married to Lady Waldemar; and the other to that lady, reproaching her for having "Tricked poor Marian Erle.

And set her own love digging her own grave.
Within her green hope's pretty garden:
As sent her forth with some one of your sort,
To a wicked house in France."

She adds that, if Lady Waldemar is Romney's wife, and will "Keep warm his heart, and clean his board, and when He speaks, be ready with obedience," etc.

If she will attend to all this, she is "safe from Marian and Aurora;" but if she "fail a point," they will

"The marriage-day arrived, and

"Half St. Giles in frieze
Was hidden to meet St. James in cloth of gold;
And, after contract at the altar, pass
To eat a marriage-feast on Hampstead Heath."

Mrs. Browning's Poems.

Feb.

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Mrs. Browning's Poems.

1887.

And much a noise will follow, the last trump's
Will scarcely seem more dreadful, even to her.

These letters sent, Aurora proceeded with Marian and her child to Florence. A letter from a friend tells her that her poem has won all suffrages, and is doing the work of an evangelist; and then speaks of Romney in words which Aurora misunderstands into conveying news of his marriage with Lady Waldemar. The natural effect of the first news is counterbalanced by the second, and Aurora sinks into a state of melancholy, which lasts till the concluding scene.

On looking up one evening, as she is sitting alone in the garden, she sees Romney standing before her. By this time, it is clear to every one but Aurora herself, and perhaps to her, that she loves him deeply. She is too much agitated to notice, either from his manner of greeting her or sitting down, that he is blind. Romney believes that she has heard of his misfortune, for it was indeed an allusion to it that she had misunderstood for a notice of his marriage; they, therefore, talk for some time at cross purposes. Romney, however, says one thing in a straightforward way:

"I have read your book,

The book is in my heart,
Lives in me, wake in me, and dreams with me:
My daily bread tastes of it, and my wine,
Which has no smack of it, I pour it out;
It seems unnatural drinking,

and refers to their old argument on Aurora's birthday, confessing himself a convert to all she then urged. He also tells her of the failure of his labours at Leigh Hall, where the people had risen up and burnt the old house to the ground; of an illness which had attacked him afterwards; and speaks so plainly, in the course of his narrative, of his unchanged love to Aurora, that she, believing him to be the husband of another woman, returns him to her. Aurora's understanding and beating about the bush is tedious, though it gives occasion to a magnificent simile—Aurora, bidding her cousin look at the stars,—

"I signed above, where all the stars were out,
As if an urgent heat had started there
A secret writing from a very remote
A blank last moment, crowded suddenly
With burning splendours."

The eclatissement comes at last. Aurora, mentioning Lady Waldemar as her cousin's wife,—

"Are ye mad?

He schooled—'Wife! mine! Lady Waldemar!'
Mrs. Browning's Poems.

and this half of the mistake is rectified; and Romney gives a letter from Lady Waldemar to Aurora, in which that lady repudiates the charge of having sent Marian "to a wicked house in France." She explains that Marian’s conductor was an old servant who had lived "five months" in her house and seen at a distance. She never raised her eyes nor took a step. "She must have been orphaned haply. Here I take the child, and having drawn this gesture saying 'so tenderly, ' My own.'"

"Ah, not married!"

"You mistake," he said, "I'm married.—Is not Marian Erie my wife? As God sees me, I have a wife and child; and I, as I am a man who honours God, Am here to claim them as my wife and child."

"I felt it hard to breathe, much less to speak. Nor word of mine was needed. Some one else was there for answering. 'Romney,' she began."

"My great good angel, Romney."

Then at first I knew that Marian Erie was beautiful. She stood there still and pale as a saint, dilated like a saint in ecstasy, as if the floating moonshine interposed between her foot and the earth, and raised her up, to float upon it. "I had left my child, Who also she said, 'having drawn this way."

"I heard you speaking—friend, confirm me now. You are this Marian, such as wicked men Have made her, for your honourable wife?"

The thrilling, solemn, proud, pathetic voice! He stretched his arms out towards the thrilling voice, as if to draw it on to his embrace. "'Til take her as God made her, and as men Must fail to unmake her, for my honoured wife.'"

"She never raised her eyes nor took a step, But stood there in her place and spoke again— "'You take this Marian's child which is her shame, In sight of men and women, for your child, Of whom you will not ever feel ashamed?"

The thrilling, tender, proud, pathetic voice! He stepped on toward it, still with outstretched arms.

As if to quench upon his breast that voice. "May God so hallow me, as I do him, And make him happy, as I let him feel. He's orphaned haply. Here I take the child To share my cup, to slumber on my knee, To play his lowest gambol at my foot, To hold my finger in the public ways, Till none shall need inquire, 'Whose child is this?"

The gesture saying so tenderly, 'My own,' This is all Marian required. She would gain her own consciousness of innocence ratified by such proof from the man she most revered, but sorrow has driven love from her heart; she cannot re-awaken in herself an interest for any but her child; she gratefully but firmly refuses to marry Romney, who believing his love to Aurora unsequestered, turned to the stars he tells her alluding again to the stars, she tells him of his blindness, and relates how the illness which produced it, was caused by an assault from Marian Erie's father, whom Romney had endeavoured to save from justice, at the time of the riots at Leigh Hall; he then again says farewell, but is stopped by Aurora, who confeses her love to him: and so the story ends—considerably to the vexation, we should think, of those readers, who may be such thorough-going haters of conventions as to wish to have had Romney actually married to Marian Erie.

The command of imagery shown by Mrs. Browning, in this poem, is really surprising, even in this day when every poetaster seems to be endowed with a more or less startling amount of that power; but Mrs. Browning seldom goes out of her way for an image, as nearly all our other versifiers are in the habit of doing as naturally and with a vital continuity, through the whole of this immensely long work, which is thus remarkably, and most favourably distinguished from the sand-weaving of so many of her contemporaries. The earnestness of the authorship is, as plainly, without affectation, and hence, thusiasm for truth and beauty, as she apprehends them, unbounded. A work upon such a scale, and with such a scope, had it been faultless, would have been the greatest work of the age; but unhappily there are faults, and very serious ones, over and above those which we have already hinted. The poem has evidently been written in a very small proportion of the time which a work so very ambitious conceived ought to have taken. The language which in passing scenes is simple and real, in other parts becomes very turgid and unpoetical; for example—

"If even God Were chiefly God by working out himself To an individual of the Infinite, Eternity, intense, profound, —still throwing up The golden spray of multitudinous worlds In measure to the prodigious weight and rush Of his inner nature—the spontaneous love Still proof and outflow of spontaneous life?"

Or, in a different style, the style, unfortunately, of hundreds of lines:—

"In those days, though, I never analyzed Myself even; all analysis came later."


There are few names that call up so many venerable associations as that of Hooker. Walston tells us that King James never mentioned him but with the epithet of learned, or judicious, or reverend, or venerable Mr. Hooker; and the portrait drawn by him in his well-known Life exactly answers this description. It is a quiet and ancient picture, majestic in its outlines, and grave in its features; and all that one has to do is to repose about it. We feel in perusing it, as we feel in gazing at certain old family portraits, that while the truth of nature in her more set moments has been preserved in the noble and impressive presence before us, yet there must have been also other traits, and some intensities of meaning in the original character, of which we can gather little or nothing from that staid quietness and dignity of look. That this is to some extent true of Walton's portrait there cannot be any doubt. Beautiful and touching as it is, and so finely expressive of the original, it does not certainly give us the full man, as he lived and laboured in those days of earnest controversy. The contemplative aspect so uniformly stamped upon it, is to some degree, although to what degree we cannot well tell, a reflection from the tranquil depths of honest Isaac's own soul. He paints here, as in all his portraits, with an unconscious touch of softening harmony, attaining unity of effect, at the expense of breadth and minuteness of detail. He represents very faithfully, we may suppose, the studious calm of the happy days which Hooker passed at Oxford within the shades of Corpus Christi College—perhaps also the somewhat sordid domesticities of "Draiton Beauchamp in Buckinghamshire," and again the innocency and sanctity of his closing pastoral life in Borne; but we cannot persuade ourselves that he gives us any true and living likeness of the preacher in the Temple, the opponent of Travers, and the champion of Anglicism. We gather this impression from a perusal of Walton's Biography itself, and still more when we turn to Fuller. History, in fiery swirls of slime,—such strangled fronts, and there catch, in a broader, but still dim and imperfect light, the picture of the rival preachers, and of the high debate they waged in the Temple Sunday after Sunday,—epitomizing in their reciprocal collision the stern conflict in which they raged throughout the kingdom. But the chief evidence of the toning down of Walton's portrait, and of the too still and reclusive light in which it is set, is to be found in Hooker's own works. Here we have in no common measure certain elements of character, of which the Life furnishes little or no hint, but which in fact it rather contradicts. The wonderful majesty and reserve, the calm elevation, and simplicity and dignity and grave earnestness with which we are familiar in the latter, are all here, and in even yet higher union than we have been led to imagine; but there are also a depth of human feeling, a power of hearty and sometimes scornful humour, and, naturally accompanying these, a rare sense and knowledge of the world which we could scarcely guess the Hooker of Walton to have possessed. Mr. Keble has drawn attention to this, and we have marked many traits of this broader and more genial and powerful character throughout the work.

The fact probably, is that Hooker presented in his true nature, and in his ordinary personal demeanour, that sort of contrast which we are not unfrequently see in men who are great students, and who live really more in their closets and in their books than they do in the world. In the latter they are staid and formal, and but half expressive of the spirit that is in them; they move feebly and awkwardly, amid conventionalities which they are never at the trouble to understand, and for which they do not care; they are supposed therefore to be both good and simple souls, with little fire of natural feeling in them, and no particular keenness and shrewdness of wit. But let the same men be contemplated with the spirit that is in them once fully awakened, and all the latent features of their intellectual life drawn forth and quickened into intensity of expression, and the aspect which they present to the world, and which has become stamped perhaps in social anecdote, is felt to be at the


Richard Hooker.