

thoroughly realizes and lives up to the truths so frequent and often so meaningless on the lips of Christians,—of the nothingness of this world—of having our hearts and treasures above. He measures everything by the standard which experience of the Infinite has taught him to apply. So, the great and small events of external history (as we reckon them), seem to him alike unimportant. The death of his child is for him no cause of trouble. He realizes that the child has but gone before to a happier and better sphere. But some trifling word or gesture which gives evidence of evil, throws him into an agony of fear. Just as, Karshish explains, the former teacher, the great sage of the pyramid, would be thrown into a paroxysm of terror by their repeating words from one of his books, trifling and meaningless to them, but which belonged to a charm, as the sage knew, able to upturn the universe from its foundations.

Lazarus thinks that Abib and Karshish alike, have a veil, as it were, before their eyes, while he seems to have a thread which he follows. Sometimes, however, when he arouses to earthly life around him, he realizes that, though his heart and brain are not of the things of this world, he still lives here. In his premature spiritual development, he has acquired some of the instincts of the eternal life, which do not fit in with the needs of this transitory existence. The great facts to which they refer, are represented as running across the path of this mortal life, which traverses the wide glories of the everlasting light, like a black thread. Oftentimes the knowledge of spiritual things appears like a light in his face, as if he again heard Christ tell him to arise. Then an impulse reminds him, he is still living on this earth, and he works diligently at his trade. Karshish thinks that the chief characteristic of Lazarus is his total submission to the Divine Will, for he knows that death will restore equilibrium to body and the soul, which has now outgrown the body. He lives just to please God, and just as long as it please Him. In talking to Lazarus, Karshish inquires of his absolute carelessness when Rome is on the march to wipe out the town. He infers that Lazarus is devoid of natural feeling. But he comes to the great conclusion that no matter what Lazarus is able to do in the way of helping his fellowmen, he does. He thinks also that Lazarus is "stark mad," chiefly because he regards Christ, who cured him, as God Himself, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, that came and dwelt in flesh on it a while.

Karshish now closes his epistle by asking pardon for "the long and tedious case," and tells Abib that he thinks he will find in what was written, good cause for his peculiar interest in Lazarus, and explains how and where he met him, and finally concludes by giving the true impression produced by the story of Lazarus on his (Karshish) mind. He not only thinks Christ the All-great, but the All-loving, too, hence the last paragraph gives the thought of the Doctrine of Divine Love for humanity.

The theme of the whole poem seems to be, the effect of an encounter with Christianity (its general influence and doctrine of Incarnation) upon a learned man in the first century of the Christian era. Browning, in this poem, shows that Christianity is suitable to the need of all men at all times.

MARGUERITE HOLTBY.

Peel Co., Ont.

"Prospice."
(Browning.)
Prize Essay.

Reflectively, I search my book-shelf for book-friends, new and old. My Favorite! Was ever choice so hard to make! A well-worn copy of Browning comes down, and the leaves flutter open to a favorite page. It is "Prospice."

When, having read the life story of Robert Browning or Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and that most ideal love-story of theirs, was not turned with kindling interest to that great poem, written in the agony following the death of his beloved wife?

The poem, "Prospice," meaning "look forward," has that hopeful uplifting quality which characterizes all Browning's work. Nay, vastly more than that, it is a poem of passionate exultation, and ex-

ultation on the very face of death; a war-cry of triumph over the last of foes. Death, the poet accedes as the climax and fruition of life, but only the gateway to great rapture—to the development of the soul in a higher sphere.

Speaking of death, Browning once said: "Death! It is this harping on death I despise so much; this idle and often cowardly, as well as ignorant harping. Why should we not change like everything else? Death is life. . . . Without death, which is our cradle-like, church-yardly word for change, for growth, there could be no prolongation of that which we call life. For myself, I deny death as an end to anything. Never say to me that I am dead."

This, then, is the spirit that the poem breathes. "Here finds expression all the impetuous blood and fierce lyric fire of militant manhood."

"Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist on my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night
The reward of it all."

How he loved to struggle, to attain!
Welcome to him was every challenge to effort. As he says:

"I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!"

This is the attitude of the true Christian, this the spirit, confident of victory, as it enters the shadows of the valley of Death. And how vivid is the description of the fearful in the line: "I would hate that death bandaged my eyes and forbore and bade me creep past." Death!—the best and last occasion for the assertion of the spirit's mastery to be thrown away in this craven-hearted fashion!

"No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers in a minute pay glad life's arrears of pain, darkness and cold." If there is ought of pain or suffering yet unpaid in life, let it be exacted now, and willingly cancelled. The awaiting joy, the recompense is worth it all.

And lo!—"For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end
And with God be the rest!"

The terrors of the shadowy vale are passing, are gone. So soon over, and oh, the revelation! From pain into exquisite peace, eternal light, reunion with the beloved, and the joy that is in the Presence of God.

The central point of the theory upon which this poem is based, would seem to be—God is Love. It may be compared to Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar." Yet, while the dignity, grace and perfection of that poem appeals to our sense of the beautiful, and our easy comprehension, it lacks, after all, that rugged strength, that passionate fire and energy of expression found in Browning's "Prospice."

Thoughtfully I lay down my book. But there has come to me a better understanding of life, a tightening of the grip upon life's problems, some of the optimism, some of the lofty enthusiasm, and the high courage that gained for the author of "Prospice," with his great understanding and power to portray the human heart, the title, "Poet of the Soul."
HONOR BRIGHT.
Halton Co., Ont.

It was a certain thunderous preacher, of the class described by William H. Hayne lately in The Independent:

"One thumps the pulpit with each thunderous word
And beats the law of Sinai on a board."

who once came to grief at family prayers. The morning hymn was "Rock of Ages," and he shouted safely through the three first verses; but when he came to the next, "When I rise to worlds unknown," he just as he reached the word "rise" he glanced down and saw it was "soar," and he made the combination, "When I soar to worlds unknown." The visitor who heard it reports it to us.

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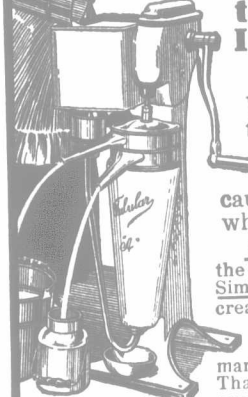
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