

and fine—though somewhat badly expressed—and concerns itself, not with line by line studies, but with general outlines. But perhaps we cannot do better than insert a few quotations which will speak for themselves:

"Already (at twenty) he had set himself to the analysis of the human soul in its manifold aspects; already he had recognized, that for him at least, there was no other study worthy of a life-long devotion. In a sense he has fulfilled this early dream; at any rate we have a unique series of monodramatic poems illustrative of typical souls. In another sense the major portion of Browning's life-work is, collectively, one monodramatic "epic." He is himself a type of the subtle, restless, curious, searching modern age of which he is the profoundest interpreter. Through a multitude of masks he, the typical soul, speaks, and delivers himself of a message which could not be presented emphatically enough as the utterance of a single individual. He is a true dramatic poet, though not in the sense in which Shakespeare is. Shakespeare and his kindred project themselves into the lives of their imaginary personages. Browning pays little heed to external life, or to the exigencies of action, and projects himself into the minds of his characters. In a word, Shakespeare's method is to depict a human soul in action, with all the pertinent play of circumstance, while Browning's is to portray the processes of its mental and spiritual development."

"Occasionally he took long walks into the country. One particular pleasure was to lie beside a hedge, or sleep in meadow grasses, or under a tree, as circumstances and the mood concurred, and there to give himself so absolutely to the life of the moment that even the shy birds would alight close by, and sometimes venturesomely poise themselves on suspicious wings for a brief space upon his recumbent body. He saw and watched everything, the bird on the wing, the snail dragging its shell up the pendulous woodbine, the bee adding to his golden treasure as he swung in the bells of the campanula, the green fly darting hither and thither like an animated seedling, the spider weaving her gossamer from twig to twig, the woodpecker heedfully scrutinising the lichen on the gnarled oak bole, the passage of the wind through leaves or across grass, the motions and shadows of the clouds, and so forth. These were his golden holidays."

A very useful feature is the complete bibliographies given in the appendix. The student can there find a complete list of all that Browning ever published, and all ever published about him, and this cannot but prove extremely useful. We hope there will be many students who will not grudge the thirty-five cents needed to add this book to their library.

C. F. H.

POEMS OF TEN TEARS.

During the past two years Canadian literature has been steadily gaining strength. All the provinces have contributed largely, but none more ably than the seagirt, snow-burdened Province of New Brunswick. One of its latest productions is "Poems of Ten Tears," by Matthew Richey Knight, a dainty little volume possessing a great deal of poetic power, and full of poetic promise. Mr. Knight is not totally unknown to the western

world of Canada, as he has been a frequent contributor to "The Week," and, we are glad to learn, has had several poems lately accepted by leading American journals.

The first thing that attracts the reader in this little volume is the powerful, touching dedication. In it there is no striving to express himself as prettily as possible; the heart speaks to the spirit heart that has been the inspiration of so much of the poet's verse. This poem so well illustrates Mr. Knight's genius that a quotation would not be out of place:

"No song of thine can reach the spirit ear;
No plaining note can draw the spirit tear,
Nor page of thee to spirit eye appear.

"The soul of thee alone its way can press
Through sensuous veil to her unearthiness
And know, not hear, that lips of silence bless."

Mr. Knight has the story telling faculty to no small degree, and in his narrative poem, St. Christopher, Nintoku Tenno, etc., well sustains the story, and shows himself possessed of considerable fluency of language. While he is not strong from the dramatic side, he occasionally has a verse of great dramatic force:

"Offer then
Mixed in the host of weaker men
And brought the fire and force of ten."

It needs no careful reading of this book to see that the poet is a loyal Briton. His "Canada to England," "A Welcome," "An Ode," are all tributes laid at the feet of the throne. While in these poems Mr. Knight shows a fair lyrical movement and good control of his verbal material, still he is beneath himself. To sing well a poet must have a thorough grip of his subject. Royalty is not sufficiently far removed from us in this age to be a fit subject for a poem. We are in the habit of criticising kingly institutions too freely, and having our eyes too well opened to the fact that only in so far as these is authority are morally and spiritually better than we are, are they worthy of our praise? When we sing the song of kings we must have a trembling doubt in our hearts that they are not worthy of our unrestrained praise, and our readers must feel that our verses, that depict the quiet love of wife or sister whom we know, are of far greater value.

The tribute to Thomas Carlyle is worthy of a second reading. The spirit of the Seer of Scotland is truly grasped and depicted:

"He stood against all sham and show
In church and mart—
My soul, though bitter, it is well to know
All that thou art:
So mayst thou do thy part."

Mr. Knight is not only a poet, but a prose writer of considerable power. He has just issued the first number of a monthly journal; it is an enthusiastically patriotic sheet, and contains articles by many of the best known and ablest Canadian writers.

T. G. MARQUIS.