

The Government Building was another place to linger. Here were armor, dress and implements of Indians and Esquimo, stuffed animals and fishes, some beautiful corals; also thousands of baby oysters fixed to old boots, lanterns, or anything firm, which had been accidentally dropped into their beds. A corner up-stairs was filled with a collection from Alaska. A war boat, a kyak, or light canoe, covered with skins top and bottom, except a round place for the oarsman to sit. It looked very frail, but they venture on the open ocean with them. There were stone lamps and axes, feast spoons of horn, inlaid with mother of pearl, musical instruments, grotesque and horrible; one looked as if made of a skull. They also had fine furs, pretty baskets made of spruce roots and grass. There were ores and amethysts, feast dresses of seal skin and feathers, one of cloth and pearl buttons of native make; and there was a large case with sixteen or twenty solid bricks of gold, and a piece of rich quartz with a vein of native metal; also totem poles of carved wood, showing the tribe and prowess of the builders.

E. S. SMITH, Michigan.

#### ROBERT BROWNING'S COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

Browning had already obtained recognition as a poet by a limited but influential circle when he became acquainted with Miss Elizabeth Barrett, the most gifted poetess of her time. She was then a confirmed invalid.

There is no cause for surprise in the passionate admiration with which Miss Barrett so instantly inspired him. To begin with, he was heartwhole. It would be too much to affirm that, in the course of his thirty-two years he had never met with a woman whom he could entirely love; but if he had, it was not under circumstances which favored the growth of such a feeling. She whom he now saw for the first

time had long been to him one of the greatest of living poets; she was learned, as women seldom were in those days. It must have been apparent, on the most fugitive contact, that her moral nature was as exquisite as her mind was exceptional. She looked much younger than her age, which he only recently knew to have been six years beyond his own; and her face was filled with beauty by the large, expressive eyes. The imprisoned love within her must have unconsciously leapt to meet his own. It would have been only natural that he should grow into the determination to devote his life to hers, or be swept into an offer of marriage by a sudden impulse which his after-judgment would condemn. Neither of these things occurred. The offer was, indeed, made under a sudden and over-mastering impulse. But it was persistently repeated till it had obtained a conditional assent.

No sane man in Mr. Browning's position could have been ignorant of the responsibilities he was incurring. He had, it is true, no experience of illness. Of its nature, its treatment, its symptoms, direct and indirect, he remained pathetically ignorant to his dying day. He did not know what disqualifications for active existence might reside in the fragile recumbent form, who in the long years lived without change of air or scene beyond the passage, not always even allowed, from bed-room to sitting-room, from sofa to bed again. But he did know that Miss Barrett received him lying down, and that his very ignorance of her condition left him without security for her ever being able to stand. A strong sense of sympathy and pity could alone entirely justify or explain his act—a strong desire to bring sunshine into that darkened life. We might be sure that these motives had been present with him if we had no direct authority for believing it, and we have this authority in his own comparatively recent words: "She had so much need of care and protection! There was so