THE POETRY OF AUBREY DE VERE.

'Tis very hard
When gentles sing for naught to all the town.
—The Spanish Gypsy.

IN genuineness of ennobling race feeling, in eloquent ex-
pression of sane worship of country, in heart-shaking
pathos and tragic emotion engendered by that worship,
in passionate love of creed, the poems of Aubrey de
Vere have rarely been surpassed by the poets of any land, perhaps
never by those of Ireland. Yet, he is seldom mentioned by Irish
writers, except by residents of his own immediate district, and by
them merely as an interesting personage. He hardly ever comes
up in conversation among Irish people and generally when he does
only to mislead the majority of the company by his historic
Norman name into mistaking him for a French author. In all the
frothy talk of the most and the least of our Irish poets, it is rare
that the fervidly patriotic effusions of De Vere, a bard so devout
in the sense of devotedness to race and country, receives even
the paltry notice of a passing allusion. Why is this? I often ask
myself the question as I sit, like the Persian poet, " scratching
the head of thought with the nails of despair." His early
reputation as an Irish poet has, I think, suffered from his sub-
sequent fame as an English man of letters ; that is one reason,
or more accurately speaking, a try at one. The mind of Ireland, more
from necessity than choice, turns to politics, not poetry ; that is
another reason. During recent years at least, the popular appetite
for poetry of the higher sort in the " Isle of Song " has not been of
a craving character ; and that, it seems to me, is still another reason.
Perhaps, the strongest reason of all is that really Ireland is no
longer a land of song, but rather a land of speech, of political
oratory. The survival in public memory of such fine poets as Moore,
Mangan, Ferguson, and McCarthy owes next to nothing to the
Irish people. How many Irishmen have read the poems of
Griffin. McGee and Father Ryan ? Comparatively few, I venture
to think. Are the poems of De Vere, one asks, forgotten, or