

POEMS BY JOHN B. TABB.

I HAVE lately had placed in my hands a small volume bearing the above title. It is a book of recent publication, neatly bound, with its poems conveniently and picturesquely disposed, as a rule, each on a single page. Judging by the eye alone, its contents are fragmentary. Frequently, poems occupy not more than one-fifth part of the space allotted to them. Still, each is none the less a finished work, and whoever would attempt to embody in the remaining four-fifths of the page, the numerous thoughts its pregnant lines suggest, would probably require uncommon conciseness of style or minuteness of penmanship. Being unprefaced, the book makes no pretensions or excuses. It asks but its face value. Its modesty is almost an indication of its merit.

Previous to receiving this quaint volume, the writer of this short article was altogether unacquainted with its author's life, and with the exception of a few stray poems, gleaned here and there among the magazines, was equally as unfamiliar with his works. This acknowledgement may be made at the expense of all claim to personal reputation, for, judging from the quality of his work, it is not improbable that "not to know him, argues oneself unknown." However, a cursory reading of this little volume supplies much desirable information, for it leads one to recognize in the hitherto unknown J. B. Tabb, a man of refined tastes, of mature faculties, and one who if his poetic genius has not

yet reached its fullest development, is certainly destined to occupy an enviable position among the poets of America.

It is worthy of remark that the author of this valuable work is a Catholic priest, and one who mingles prayer with poetry. Its contents are suggestive of his occupation, not so much on account of the nature of the subjects it treats, but its pensive character, its devout and dignified beauty of conception, added to its finished brevity of execution, is fully in accordance with what might be expected of one whose mind traverses the paths of Calvary as well as of Parnassus, and whose thoughts are drawn more frequently and more dutifully towards his bible and crucifix than towards his pen.

The volume is divided into three parts. Its opening pages comprise a number of miscellaneous poems. Its second part comes under the designation of "quatrains," and its third division consists of a series of beautiful sonnets. The whole contains about one hundred and seventy short poems, many of which are eminently distinguished by their artistic finish and general literary excellence.

The first lines, addressed to Sidney Lanier, give an agreeable indication of what the succeeding pages may be expected to disclose. They run in this strain:

"Ere Time's horizon line was set,
Somewhere in space our spirits met,
Then o'er the starry parapet
Came wandering here.