

is an old saying, so if backsliders and opponents have left in obscurity the name of Aubrey De Vere, it is undoubtedly the duty of every Irishman, whether at home or abroad, to bring that name before the public, that the venerable bard of Erin may not descend to the grave without receiving the tribute of respect due to one who has labored so perseveringly for the dearest interests of God, humanity and native land.

Having in mind the remarks we made upon poetry in general and upon Mr. De Vere's poetry in particular, throughout our last paper, it will hardly seem strange that we bestow upon this gifted Irish bard the title of greatest living poet. Such an encomium would be a decided exaggeration did true poetry consist in the mere jingle of carefully measured verse. As far as the mechanical structure of stanzas and the harmonizing of words are concerned a Swinburne might perhaps leave our modest Irishman in the shade. But no, thank heaven ! poetry is not intended to please the ear alone ; its more congenial sphere of action is the human heart, where it ought to arouse ennobling and generous emotions, and, by so doing, elevate, at least a little, the standard of human excellence. In our last paper on Mr. De Vere's writings, it was clearly shown that this is where the author's poetic forces have their stronghold. Soaring high aloft on wings of Faith above the cold unpoetic calculations of our nineteenth century, he seeks his inspirations at the unchanging source of all excellence, the very Heart of the Divinity. In the words of that other illustrious bard of Erin it may be said of Mr. De Vere :

"He allures to brighter worlds and leads the way."

Keeping himself free from all that is 'of the earth, earthly,' he furnishes the public with a timely and effective antidote against the dangerous atheism and immorality of modern verse. Never before perhaps was this society-saving remedy more urgently needed. Our day possesses many a writer gifted by God with no ordinary poetic talent ; but alas ! this gift of an all-generous Providence is, in many cases, woefully dragging and being trampled in the mire. It is wasting its

splendid powers on things exclusively terrestrial and transitory, instead of directing them towards Him who ought to be the object of every human thought and word, and action. Leaving out the idea of the Divinity whence can one draw any truly poetical inspiration ? Where can we find ideas and aspirations worthy of being clothed in the costly garb woven by poetic art, if not amongst the mysterious treasures of Him who is styled the Alpha and Omega, the Ever Ancient and Ever New ? The vast majority of modern versification, since it has disregarded this the primary source of all excellence, is not only non-poetical but is moreover absolutely inimical to all truly poetic taste. May the all-watchful Deity preserve this gentle art from ever degenerating into that sensual indelicacy and artificial succession of alliterations and assonances, which disfigure rather than adorn the over-elaborate productions of a Swinburne. Speaking of latter day poets, Mr. De Vere himself says :

The world's base poets have not kept
Song's vigil on her vestal height,
Nor scorn'd false pride and foul delight,
Nor with the weepers rightly wept,
Nor seen God's visions in the night !

And then, advising poets regarding the divine nature of their calling he speaks as follows :

For wilder'd feet point out the path
Which mounts to where triumphant sit
The Assumed of earth, all human yet,
From sun-glare safe and tempest's wrath,
Who sing for love : nor those forget,

The Elders crown'd that, singing, fling
Their crowns upon the Temple floor ;
Those Elders ever young, though hoar,
Who count all praise an idle thing
Save His who lives for evermore !

That Mr. De Vere has carefully aimed at this high ideal is amply demonstrated in every line of his writings. Not satisfied with the negative excellence usually claimed for Wordsworth, he centres our minds upon a nobler world, and instills into our souls the lofty science of the saints. Amongst the majority of modern thinkers, such a course costs its followers very much, aye, even condemns them to a kind of social exile. Our generous-hearted Irish bard has been equal to the