

poet, his friend the author of that magnificent modern drama, Philip Van Artevelde, the poet and critic, Sir Henry Taylor, says: "I have read and considered your volume [probably the "Poems," London, 1855, is here meant.] a great deal, and written to you not a little upon it with the mind's pen, curious to know, if you be not a great poet, wherein you fail. Not in intellect, certainly, for therein you range with Coleridge and Wordsworth, and above Tennyson; not in art or the rhythmic sense, for in that you equal Wordsworth; not in fancy, of which you have more than any of them. Is it, then, in human and imaginative passion? That, I think, is the only question. Do your ardours and raptures partake more of intellectual and spiritual excitement than of poetic passion? for I rather think there is a real distinction, and that the passion which exercises a poetical power over the minds of others is a passion connected with the human and earthly senses and affections. From time to time in your poetry you do *touch* the deepest depths of poetic passion but you do not dwell in them.... If passion be the element which is defective in your poetry—i. e. relatively defective, less abounding than other elements, and mastered by them—that will account for its want of popularity, since intellectual poetry is a fatigue and a riddle to the popular mind if unimpassioned; and nothing but high excitement of the senses and the feelings will disclose it to such minds. Give them that, and even what is unintelligible to them does not seem so."

Well, De Vere has long since learned to "give them that." Much of his later work is as "simple, sensuous, and passionate" as Milton himself, who gave us those marks of true poetry, could desire. To take an example, his longer Irish poems are not wanting in passion, using the word in its humanizing sense. And whether by virtue of this or some of his other great qualities, those poems are steadily growing in popularity, while the increasing acceptance that is now extended to almost all his poems both in Great Britain and America indicates that Sir Henry Taylor was not far wrong when he conjectured they were, at the time he wrote, in that subterranean stage of their existence through which the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth crept for twenty years, and that of Alfred Tennyson for ten, to issue at last into light. So true is it that poetry must create the atmosphere in which it is to live and prosper.