

courtesy. In his profession and in his life he was a man of stainless integrity and high purity of purpose. As a son, a brother and a guardian, he showed the tenderest affection and the most loyal and thoughtful fidelity. An attached son of the English Church he served her in the Diocesan synods of Montreal and Quebec as well as in the work he did for the Church University, and in devoted and regular acts of communion and of Christian charity.

His personal friendships were choice, warm and lasting, and in the quiet social circle his graceful culture and frequently sunny humour were well known to his intimates. His high ideal of his work led him not unfrequently to increase its weight by refining almost unduly the accuracy of that which he had to prepare; he did not like 'rough and ready' work; he was wonderfully painstaking in investigation and thoroughly reliable in his statements and reports in matters of law and business. His weakness of health scarcely ever allowed him the opportunity to do himself full justice at the bar, but he did much good and solid work both there and afterwards at Lennoxville. He had been for more than ten years a member of the Corporation. It was his energy and personal influence which contributed more than any other single factor to the success of the Lennoxville Almshouse Dinner in January, 1896, held at the Windsor Hotel, Montreal. In raising the memorial fund for the Bishop Williams wing then started, he took a leading part. In that and every effort to extend the influence and well being of "Lennoxville" he took an active share, both in working and in giving liberally. When he became an official of the college he worked in no official spirit, but in the spirit of true and loyal devotion and religious earnestness, of rare constancy and independence, courageous in his outspoken support of what he thought right, a man whose friendship was not confined to fair weather nor to the utterance of fair words, a man of rare constancy in following out his ideals, he has been taken early, at the age of 42, from a world that can ill spare such high-minded integrity and loyal devotion to duty. The life of unassuming and constant goodness is always complete. We cannot wish for a family, a community, a school, a college, a church or an empire a higher wish than that there never should be wanting in any of these, men of the type of character, strong in simplicity, strong in faith, so admirably illustrated in the career of the late A. D. Nicolls.



CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the MITRE.

SIR,—I have no doubt that your readers have been pleased and edified by the papers on the Imaginative Faculty from Dean Norman's scholarly

pen. One must admire his quietly moderate criticism of Browning when one remembers how vehemently Browning has been assailed. That he is obscure to some is now a commonplace in English literature which has even crept into fiction, for Besant and Rice in the Golden Butterfly give us a pathetic instance of how a would-be *literatus* may struggle to no purpose with such poems as *Fifine at the Fair*. Is it not true that the bitter assailants of Browning are those who have failed to follow him to his summit owing to the precipitous path chosen by him? It is of course true that not all minds can always follow his rugged imagination as it rushes upward independent of the beaten but winding way. But no one ever took the trouble "to meet him fully half way, having previously awakened their senses that they may the better judge," and to follow him in his mount, without admitting that new beauties are before the soul from Browning's point of view which remain undiscovered to the followers in the jingling fife-and-drum party. He could hardly be said to

"Sweep his thoughts as angels do
Their wings, with cadence, up the Blue."

In him we have an obvious instance of the supremacy of matter over form; a refreshing instance to turn to in the present day when so much stress is laid upon the mechanism of verse and the meaning does not so much matter. Dr. Dumbell finds "his apparent scorn for the first principles of English composition disgusting at first." He is right I think in saying 'at first.' For the difficulty in Browning will after the first glance be found not so much in the grammatical construction and language in which the poems are written as in the sequence of thought. Speaking of the imaginative faculty, his may be described as intellectual rather than emotional, and consequently his poems could hardly be expected to run as smoothly as those simple lines which deal with the feelings of the heart. I submit that no great poet ever expressed his deepest thoughts to the satisfaction of his hasty, shallow or indolent readers. One can understand his disgusting such as these. Writing in 1872 Browning said, "I do not apprehend any more charges of being wilfully obscure, unconscientiously careless or perversely harsh." He was evidently too sanguine.

Dean Norman in the course of his criticism expresses his appreciation of many of his poems as superb. Dr. Dumbell writing to comment on his papers as one in company with him condemns Browning *in toto*. The two criticism must perforce part company when the latter makes "the obscurity in which Browning involves his thoughts spoil everything!" If such be the case; if Abt Vogler, Saul, The Grammarian's Funeral and especially Love Among the Ruins, etc., be spoiled, even as regards form, then one would wish that our literature might go on receiving just such spoiled poems. If one goes