

PREFACE.

eloquently every feeling and emotion which gives vivacity and superabundant life to their sonnets. The English sonnet-writers are more contemplative and grave than the Latins, but are less emotional and passionate. Among an exuberant and volatile people, such as the Latins, this absence of emotional feeling constitutes a grave defect.

The most popular of English sonnet-writers, among Continental Europeans, is Mrs. Browning, whose fame is due, less to her genius than to the soothing influence of a Southern atmosphere, which gives warmth, color, and vivacity to her sonnets. Her "Songs from the Portuguese" are the best known and most appreciated poems in English literature.

As notable examples of sonnets of genius, we may here appropriately mention: Milton's sonnet on "Blindness," addressed to himself; Wordsworth's on "Milton," Shakespeare on "The Marriage of True Minds," Keats on "Looking Into Chapman's Poems," and, as a conspicuous example of genius, Shelley's "Ozymandias."

To most persons sonnet composition is a dry and difficult subject, but there are minds so constituted that that which is arduous and uninteresting is, for this very reason, alluring and pleasing.

To embody in a convenient form examples of the Petrarchan and Shakespearian sonnets, to express his thoughts in a simple but vigorous style, to give to the sonnets all possible advantage of method and arrangement, were the motives which governed the action of the author of this book. The scope of his labors has been to popularize the sonnet, to dispose and exemplify