

completeness is as remarkable as the quality of its detailed drawing and local colouring.

In her smaller poems Mrs. Browning seems to work clear of mannerisms. In these she stands before us in no classic adornment, but decorated only with the perfect beauty of her own womanliness and truth. Especially is this true in the *Cry of the Human* and in *Sleep*. In the latter the deep feeling touches each heart:

"And friends dear friends, when it shall be  
That this low breath has gone from me,  
And round my bier you come to weep,  
Let one most loving of you all  
Say—not a tear must o'er her fall  
He giveth His beloved sleep."

Had Mrs. Browning always been so simple her poems might be found on every cottage shelf.

Over all the domain of her poetry, over its mental ranges its quiet gardened valleys, its tinkling rills, falls a radiance of gospel light. Ever as her music rises to its noblest cadence it seems to take up an angel harp; the highest tone is as the voice of spirits.

Mrs. Browning is essentially a Christian poet. Not in the sense of appreciating like Carlyle the loftiness of the Christian type of character; not in the sense of preaching like Wordsworth, an august but abstract morality, but in the sense of finding like Cowper, the whole hope of humanity bound up in Christ. It is difficult but possible to bear the reflection that many great female writers have rejected that gospel that has done more for woman than any other civilizing agency, but it is well that the greatest woman of all looks up in faith and love to that eye that fell on Mary from the cross. The greatest woman of all! this is the verdict of an able critic, who, though acknowledging that he was not acquainted with all great female writers, yet states that he looked at Mrs. Browning as one looks towards the brow of a lofty mountain rising over the clouds, and crowned with ancient snows, and has an assurance, even though it rises amid lower hills, and the elevation of each has not been actually taken, that it is peerless.

In the poetry of Mrs. Browning are qualities which admit of its being compared with those of the greatest men; touches which only the mightiest give. With the few sovereigns of literature, the Homers, Shakespeares, Miltons, she does not rank. But in full recollection of Scott's magical versatility and bright, cheerful glow, of Byron's fervid passion and magnificent description, of Wordsworth's majesty, of Shelly's million-coloured fancy, of Tennyson's golden calm, she is worthy of being mentioned with any poet of this century. She has the breadth and versatility of a man; no sameness, no one idea, no type character, our single Shaksperean woman!

H. M. B., '94.