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## REPENTANCE.

Oh, wounded at my hands! My bruised one,  
Who lay in thought long, long against my heart,  
Till of my life you formed the dearest part;  
So close my arms of love enwrapped you, none  
Could pierce you ere my shelt'ring veins had run  
In hot, quick protest 'gainst the poison'd dart,  
But now my cruel hands have made the smart,  
By which I am undone, I am undone!

How could I doubt you? Thrust you from my hold,  
And hurt you nigh to death with sudden hate?  
Oh, tenderness that bore the test of years;  
Oh, loyal, true greatheartedness, behold,  
Your place is left unto me desolate!  
Dark with repentant, unavailing tears.

A. ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

## SONNET POETRY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

If one were seeking a clue to the spirit of this age as reflected in its poetry, he would have to turn to the poetry which takes on the sonnet form. This is the age of sonnets. The best poetry to be found in the current literature of the day is sonnet poetry. The æsthetic taste of the times demands for its gratification what is exquisitely fine and delicate; something, indeed, like the sonnet itself, which reminds us of the fragrant summer night wind, breathing and whispering, and reaching even to the gentle night-voice, and then dying away amid the untuned harmonies of the leaves which it rustled and whence it arose. If this be the taste of the day, and there is every reason to think it is, there can be no ground for the assertion that the bloom has gone from the flower of poesy. The attention bestowed on sonnet-structure, and the minute care with which the older sonnets in literature are being studied, must be taken to indicate the growth of a higher and healthier poetic taste. Leigh Hunt said that the love of Italian poetry has always been greatest in England, when English poetic genius has been in its highest condition. We know how true this has been in the past; if it be true of the present, and if we may prophesy out of time, then the inspiration of a new poetic life should be about to descend upon us, and it needeth but the right conjunction for the evolution of the new poetic soul. The skeptics are wont to laugh at this; they insinuate that the poetic spirit is dying; they tell us the world is older than it was, and

The other side of life turns brown to white—  
Enthusiasm withers at the core,  
And reason shrouds the earlier ecstasy.

Perhaps so; yet history points to the fact that when the times were ripe the man appeared, and not until then; and this applies to the transcendent expression of passionate individuality in poetry as in all life. Thus it is that finite, fleeting conditions are linked to infinite potentialities. Evidence of the influence of Italian poetry at the present time is not wanting. Mr. Samuel Waddington, him-

self a sonnet writer of no mean repute, has lately edited a volume of "Sonnets of Europe," composed of translations of famous sonnets by European writers of ten nationalities, and fully one-half of these are Italian. Seventeen are from Petrarch, thirteen from Dante, and eleven from Michael Angelo. The importance which Mr. Waddington puts upon these early European sonnets is pointed out in his preface. "The sonnets of Dante, and Michael Angelo, of Petrarch, Camoens and Ronsard could hardly fail to attract even those who are not especially interested in this form of verse—while to those who are, it were difficult to imagine what would furnish greater delight than the perusal of these 'old masters' of the 'Sonnet.'"

But besides the evidence of the development of the poetic spirit adduced by Leigh Hunt, there is another indication of the same truth which appeals to us directly, and that is that sonnet poetry is esoteric; it is poetry for poets; it is the music of a silent voice; it is heart-rhythm keeping touch with the individual soul, communing with itself. That is why Shakespear's sonnets, though disregarding the music of the earlier sonnet form, affect us so deeply. It would be easy to multiply examples, but the sonnets of Shakespeare which I recall in this regard, beginning

"Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day?"

and

"Let me confess that we two must be twain,"

are too well known to reproduce here. But this one of Petrarch's, translated by Thomas W. Higginson, expresses the idea with great beauty.

"Those arms, 'neath which my passionate rapture rose,  
The arms, hands, feet, the beauty that erewhile  
Could my own soul from its own self beguile.  
And in a separate world of dreams enclose;  
The hair's bright tresses, full of golden glows,  
And the soft lightning of the angelic smile,  
That changed this earth to some celestial isle,  
Are now but dust, poor dust, that nothing knows.  
And yet I live! myself I grieve and scorn,  
Left dark without the light I loved in vain,  
Adrift in tempest on a bark forlorn;  
Dead is the source of all my amorous strain,  
Dry is the channel of my heart outworn,  
And my sad harp can sound but notes of pain."

And this one of Keats', so like Petrarch's, and so full of rhythm-colour and "tidal music."

"The day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!  
Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand and softer breast,  
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,  
Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous waist!  
Faded the flower and all its budded charms,  
Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,  
Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,  
Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—  
Vanished unseasonably at shut of eve,  
When the dusk holiday—or holineight  
Of fragrant-curtained love begins to weave  
The woof of darkness thick for hid delight;  
But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,  
He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray."