

# THE PROVINCIAL.

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POEMS.—BY A. SMITH.\*

THE unwilling conviction is forced upon the mind that delights in the pure and beautiful influences which touch the finer feelings of our nature, that the present age is one too busy and practical to be poetical. We look back upon the years which now alone belong to history, and as we recount the shining names that burn in the bright galaxy of the poets of the early part of the nineteenth century—Byron, Shelley, Southey, Coleridge, Campbell, Rogers, Moore, with a host of lesser lights, we ask, 'where are the kindred hearts to fill their vacant places? and mournfully respond to the truth of the cadence, as echo answers, 'where.' We look around and there is not one. Tennyson, perhaps, with his sentimentalism and extravagance, may find a few admirers among those who rejoice in the mysteries and darknesses with which metre can surround very commonplace assertions, and Mrs. Browning, with her occasional bursts of genuine and soul-stirring poetry, delights still more with her German mysticisms, and high sounding philosophy. With the exception of Longfellow, in America, and Mrs. Norton, in England, the present day, to our thinking, has not a single poet that all classes will read and all admire; because none have taken humanity for their theme, and human passions and feelings for their illustrations; speaking, though in song, the language of our common nature, and building up for themselves, by their very simplicity, an altar in the heart of every being, who has feeling to appreciate, and taste to admire. Such a poet as this, in his fullness and perfection, the present age requires. Nearly every day we see some new claimant to poetic distinction springing into being, but the claim is not a valid one; the title deeds are wanting for the glorious inheritance, and after a brief struggle, the aspirant gives up the pursuit and sinks into his first insignificance.

We have been induced to make these preliminary observations by the perusal of a new volume of poems, which has just issued from the London press. They are written by a Mr. Alexander Smith, and the greater part of them have appeared, at different intervals, in the columns of the London Critic,

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