

a partial and fallacious criticism. Doubtless, when an age has passed, and "Orbed into the perfect star we saw not, when we moved therein," those characteristics of it which are poetic, are visible to all men, even of meanest sight, and in a degree undreamt of while they were being enacted; but those tendencies, and movements, and underlying ideas were in existence while moulding men's lives, as much as they are historically so, after their age and influence have passed away. The true Poet can see them, and it is within his province to unveil them to those who have not his insight.

"I do distrust the poet who discerns
No character or glory in his times,
And trundles back his soul five hundred years,

* * *

Nay! if there's room for poets in the world
A little overgrown, (I think there is)
Their sole work is to represent the age,
Their age, not Charlemagne's—this living, throbbing age,
That brawls, cheats, maddens, calculates, aspires,
And spends more passion, more heroic heat
Betwixt the mirrors of its drawing-rooms,
Than Roland with his knights, at Roncesvalles."

More than one of the characteristics I have mentioned may be attributed with some plausibility to her sex. There are others which are so evidently derived from this source that it would be a work of supererogation to speak of them at length. I may allude, in a word—to her impulsiveness, her femininity of detail, the tenderness of her erotic pieces, and, still more marked, their entire and beautiful self-abnegation. But there is one which is not so obviously to be traced, and yet is none the less the offspring of the woman. I refer to that phase of mental method which is undoubtedly characteristic of the womanly intellect as contrasted with the manly; the deductive as opposed to, or rather as supplementing the inductive. The progress accruing from the application to science of the inductive method has been unduly exaggerated. To quote conspicuous examples of the discoveries of the opposite method, it was not induction but deduction which told Newton the secret of the universal system; it was not induction but deduction which led the poet Goethe to the discovery for which he was fitted by no previous anatomical knowledge, that the skull is simply composed of vertebrae; "in other words—that the bony covering of the head, is simply an expansion of the bony covering of the spine;"—a discovery which for fifty years after, the anatomists of England, working by induction, were unable to arrive at. The preponderance of emotion and impulse in women, leads them to more ideal habits of thought; and they instinctively adopt that mode of reasoning which begins with ideas and ends with facts, leaving to men the other method of proceeding from facts to ideas. The most cursory perusal of Mrs. Browning's poetry will furnish at least one example of the correctness of this proposition.

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