

LAURENCE HOPE

LAURENCE HOPE has succeeded where most modern poets have failed, older and greater than this woman who died so young. She has created for herself a world of admirers, a multitude of initiants—a Public. Therefore she is bound to fascinate those who diligently inquire into the modern mind, and who love to grasp the elusive psychology of the present. Nor will this essay refer to metre, style, and phrase, except so far as these subtleties exemplify the character and ideals of this curiously sincere poetess. Other Muses of to-day are widely loved, Imperial Muses, worthy of all respect; but there is as little mystery about their attractions as doubt of their divinity. It is harder to account for nine impressions of “The Garden of Kama.” An outworn Byronism, a desperately sentimental affection for the sonorous names of the fantastic East, can partly explain this popularity; nor can we overlook a half-scandalous appetite for free speech. But the true cause must be sought in the nature of the feminine—in the appreciation of Laurence Hope by her sex.

With all allowance be it said, we have never before had an English poet who was a woman. The wise are beginning to observe that Mrs. Browning hardly ever wrote a line that was structurally good; the veiled majesty and demure sorrow of Christina Rossetti proclaim her a recluse and a devotee. Alone has the authoress of “The Garden of Kama” set down for us with unflinching truth and vigour a woman’s point of view.