

to sparkle on the breast of loveliness, so thought in the ore has little use or charm, and sparkles and captivates only when polished and set in cunning sentences by the literary artist.

I shall now endeavor to enumerate, in a very general manner, what seems to me the predominant short-comings of our author. Some of them have already been noted among my remarks on the lyrics, and they need not be repeated. A fault to be found in very many of his earlier productions is exuberance. Singleness of effect is sacrificed to the in-crowding thoughts, and, paradoxically speaking, we cannot see the wood for the trees. His purely doctrinal poems must be, I fear, considered misfits and mistakes. Theology and the Muses, when driven by a lesser genius than Dante, make exceedingly bad yoke-fellows. The elephant, theology, should not be expected to dance on the giddy tight-rope of verse. Theology will never find poetry a sufficiently direct medium of expression, since the latter, to borrow the words of James Russell Lowell, "instructs not by precept and inculcation, but by hints, and indirections, by inducing a mood rather than by enforcing a principle or a moral." Few poets have succeeded in setting a doctrine to music, and the failure has been all the greater when the doctrine enunciated happened to be a creedal one. De Vere is, perhaps, as successful as any other poet of the English tongue, but that is not saying much, even with Milton, Cowper and Shelley in evidence. His habit of almost endless contemplation, too, seems now and then to betray him into obscurity; for the material of thought re-acts upon the thought itself, and if the process be continued over-long, one thought will become so blended with another, and that other with a third and fourth, that the resulting amalgam will present nothing definite or distinct. He has the power to recall, awaken and dramatically inform the historic past, but in his Irish historical poems he frequently assumes a close knowledge of early Irish history on the part of his readers in no way justifiable, I am sorry to say, whether they be Celts or Saxons. In the poems founded on the later history of his country he takes no account of English prejudices, which are almost as strong to-day as in the days of Queen Elizabeth, but blandly assumes that such unseemly things were as far removed from the minds of others as they were from his own. When "Inisfail" was published, Sir Francis Doyle,