

MODERN POETRY.

"And thou sweet Poetry! thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade:
Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart or strike for honest fame
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride:
Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe
That found'st me poor at first and keep'st me so
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare-thee-well."

These words bear the appeal of a lover of poetry who saw that, when avarice and ambition had taken the place of simplicity and contentment, poetry must fall rapidly into decay. The words as we read them now and look in vain through the English speaking world for some man who is worthy to bear the name of poet, bring before us the question, Why is it thus? Surely all are not under the influence which Goldsmith attacks. Surely out of the many learned and capable men whom we see around us, there are many who are not affected by the vices which he decries. Yet, why are there no poets in our language to-day?

We believe that the age of poetry is past. True poetry is the art of doing by the pen what the painter does by the brush—producing an *illusion* on the imagination. The human mind in its less perfect state was more sensitive to the charms of poetry than it is at present. The illusion of the poet was taken by the semi-barbarian as a reality. When the old poets are now read the illusion is taken for an illusion, it is often looked upon as silly and seldom admired. The creative faculties are now gone. Niagara would have inspired a poem in ages gone by: to-day it is reckoned by its horse-power.

Another factor that plays a very important part in poetry is language. The language of a half-civilized people is simpler; it is better adapted for painting images, consequently it is more the language of the poet, than a more advanced tongue. The abstracting of the scientist changes a language