

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

The subject of this sketch is Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the illustrious wife of a yet more illustrious husband, and both won their fame in the paths of literature. Mrs. Browning has given many poems to the world: "Sonnets from the Portuguese," "Casa Guidi Windows," "Aurora Leigh," and others poems, which have been accorded a place in the very foremost rank of English lyrical poetry, yet it is the story of her life, more especially of her life with Robert Browning—idyllic from courtship to death—that most fascinates us, and enables us to see in her work so often Elizabeth Browning herself, noble woman and idolized wife.

An invalid from her birth, Elizabeth Barrett was hedged about from the world almost as a recluse, still less on account of her ill-health than because of an almost insane desire on the part of her father that his children should not marry, nor have any intercourse which might lead to such a consummation. No social life was hers, and she was 36 years of age before she met Robert Browning. The meeting was a matter of love at first sight, and, in truly orthodox fashion, the way did not run smooth, for invalid though Miss Barrett was, a secret marriage at Marylebone Church and a speedy departure to Havre, seemed a necessity. That the step caused no subsequent regrets, may be judged from the fact that, on each succeeding visit to England, Robert Browning visited the church in which this marriage had taken place and kissed the paving stones. Not so well pleased, however, was Mrs. Browning's father, who resisted every pleading for forgiveness, and refused to have anything to do with his daughter again while he lived.

This, however, seems to have been the only blot on an otherwise complete though sadly short life. Wholly congenial, interested in the same things, inspired by the same objects, and heartily admiring each other, wealthy enough even to live with some luxury, the Brownings wandered from place to place, travelling with Carlyle part of the time, and hovering between London and Italy for longer sojourns. So passed the space of three or four years; and in 1849 a little son, of whom Mrs. Browning wrote, "I am prouder than of twenty Auroras," was born—and in their beloved Florence.

In the summer of 1860, however, the family returned to Florence together for the last time. Almost immediately Mrs. Browning had a return of her old bronchial trouble, and the end came on the night of the 28th of June. "The most perfect expression of her love to me," writes her husband, "within my whole knowledge of her—always smilingly happy and with a face like a girl's—and in a few minutes she died in my arms, her head on my cheek. . . . So God took her to himself as you would lift a sleeping child from a dark, uneasy bed into your arms and the light. Thank God. Her last word, when I asked, 'How do you feel?'—'Beautiful!'"

"Aurora Leigh" is the most notable of Mrs. Browning's poems. It has been mistakenly called an autobiography, for, in the lives of its heroine and that of Mrs. Browning there exists no similarity at all. Nevertheless, the conclusions reached may be taken as those of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who has, in them, shown herself an able interpreter of life and art.

HOW TO GIVE A HOT AIR BATH

A hot-air bath cannot be given without the proper apparatus for giving it. This consists of a cabinet, which, when closed, is flat and can be conveniently carried, and when opened for use forms a square enclosure in which the patient sits on a chair, with a folded blanket under him, and another at his back to lean against. Flaps of leather fasten around the neck, and the space left is filled in with a large towel to keep out air. That part of the cabinet which is directly behind the patient as he sits, is provided with a small door, which can be opened to light and extinguish the alcohol lamp used for heating, which is placed in a tin pan, or on a tray, immediately under the chair, and through which the flame can be watched and the heat tested, for the prevention of accidents. It takes a few minutes to get the

cabinet warm, so the lamp can be started before the patient gets in. All the clothing must be removed, and the patient wrapped in a blanket; he seats himself in a chair, his feet resting on a hot water bag. Then the cabinet is shut, and the loosened blanket taken out through the opening at the neck, the towel put around as before mentioned, with another towel wrung out in cold water over that, and a cloth wrung out in ice water bound around the head. This must be kept cold by frequent changing. The lamp must be carefully watched, and the blankets arranged in such a way that they cannot take fire, and so that the patient cannot set fire to himself while handing out the blanket, or sheet, in which he was wrapped to enter the bath. Finally envelope the cabinet in a blanket to protect the cracks. Twenty minutes is the usual length of time for a hot-air bath, but some will not be able to stand so long. People with heart trouble often cannot take these

baths, and they should not be given without the doctor's order. Very much of the same result is obtained by giving a footbath in bed, which is generally better for those who are weak, or have some heart trouble. To take the patient out of the bath:

First, put out the lamp, remove the cloth from the head, sponge face with cold water, and dry, and take off the wet towel around the neck. With the dry one, reach in and wipe the patient's chest and back, and leave it as a covering for these parts. Then give the patient a towel so that he may help to dry himself, and the cabinet can be opened enough for the nurse to wipe his feet, and give him his slippers. The blanket, against which he has been leaning, and which is warm, can then be taken out and spread on his bed, and as he rises, the blanket which enveloped the cabinet, also warm, is thrown around him, and he gets into bed as fast as possible, where, after a few minutes'

rest, he is rapidly sponged off with warm water, to which may be added a handful of salt, or, if the perspiration is very acid causing irritation, some baking soda. If the patient is strong enough, he may get into a tub of hot water and take an ordinary bath, in all cases resting in bed for an hour afterwards. While he is in the cabinet, let him drink as much water (cold or hot) as he will, and be especially careful to keep the head cool by means of the cold cloth, or sponging with cold water if necessary.

A. G. OWEN.

When a man wears his piety as an ornament you can depend on its being paste.

When you come to say good-bye to old sins it is unwise to hold a farewell meeting.

If vinegar would preserve morals some men are sour enough to save the world.—Ex.

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