—is a product of pure artistic fancy, tempered by the au-
thor's mysticism.   Keats, true and sacred poet as he was,
loved Nature with a somewhat sensuous devotion.   She
was for him a mistress rather than a Diotima; nor did
he share the prophetic fire which burns in Shelley's verse,
quite apart from the direct enunciation of his favourite
tenets.   In none of Shelley's greatest contemporaries was
the lyrical faculty so paramount; and whether we consid-
er his minor songs, his odes, or his more complicated cho-
ral dramas, we acknowledge that he was the loftiest and
the most spontaneous singer of our language.   In range
of power he was also conspicuous above the rest.   Not
only did he write the best lyrics, but the best tragedy, the
best translations, and the best familiar poems of his centu-
ry.   As a satirist and humourist, I cannot place him so
high as some of his admirers do; and the purely polemi-
cal portions of his poems, those in which he puts forth his
antagonism to tyrants and religions and custom in all its
myriad forms, seem to me to degenerate at intervals into
poor rhetoric.

While his genius was so varied and its flight so unap-
proached in swiftness, it would be vain to deny that Shel-
ley, as an artist, had faults from which the men with whom
I have compared him were more free.   The most promi-
nent of these are haste, incoherence, verbal carelessness,
incompleteness, a want of narrative force, and a weak hold
on objective realities.   Even his warmest admirers, if they
are sincere critics, will concede that his verse, taken alto-
gether, is marked by inequality.   In his eager self-aban-
donment to inspiration, he produced much that is unsatis-
fying simply because it is not ripe.   There was no defect
of power in him, but a defect of patience; and the final
word to be pronounced in estimating the larger bulk of

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