

of the tomb. It is refreshing to observe how largely Miss Barrett overcomes what, in her case, would be a half-pardonable weakness. Her poetry, as a rule, is wholesome and invigorating, and its worth, therefore, is specialized, but by no means destroyed, because it often seems to come from a voice far removed from the toil and care of humanity. In the first half of her life her chief task is to remind men, as they move about among the things which are seen and temporal, that this, after all, is the realm of phenomena, and the unseen world, the realm of true reality. She cannot understand why the ear should be quick to catch the sounds of nature and men, and be deaf to anything beyond :—

"Harken, harken !
Shall we hear the lapsing river
And our brother's sighing ever,
And not the voice of God ?"

Though most people are quite content to tread in the every-day track of ordinary matters, and do not trouble themselves to listen much to the music of the spheres, there are spirits like hers who seem to seek vainly a home upon our planet. They knock at earth's gate, and failing to gain admission they dwell on the outer side of it, seeing more clearly than others see the scars and rents of humanity ; hearing more distinctly than others hear the low, moaning cry of the world's pain which rises now and then into a shriek of woe ; yet believing more firmly than others will believe that there is a final solution for human mysteries and a final solace for human woes, that

"Knowledge by suffering entereth,
And life is perfected by death."

While the poetess desires that the motive of her work should be carefully considered before passing judgment upon it, she refuses with disdain the patronizing criticism dictated by mere courtesy. Panoplied like Joan of Arc, she enters the poetic arena and throws down a challenge to all comers. It may be that she was made a little too sensitive because of current impressions in regard to the intellectual poverty of women, though we cannot but sympathise with her implied protest against poetic ostracism on account of her sex, and her just demand to be estimated without prejudice or contempt according to her merits. In the course of an apostrophe to women, De Quincey ventures to remark : "Pardon me if I doubt whether you will ever produce a great poet from your choirs." Whatever place may be ultimately assigned to Mrs. Browning in the