

With *sin* came ignorance and there generated in man's soul anger, despondency, superstitions. Though we have come far and the years treasure much filth the skirt that wraps the present century is still dark, and far removed from whiteness. Thus Ben Ezra finds it and with kindly yet powerful hand does further cleanse the soiled garment and reach it one move nearer the second Eden.

True, as yet it may prove too powerful a tonic and weaken where it should make strong, but what nature can for long gaze unennobled at the picture here drawn? Where the strong and well-furnished man with shoulders thrown back and eye alight drinks in his life to the full—the bitter with the sweet, and thankfully murmurs,—'tis good to live and learn"; how his soul grows strong neath the weight of years till at last "he sees all nor is afraid," for with a smile on his lips and his cheer in our ears he boldly takes the leap we all do stumble over. It fairly makes the blood tingle and the teeth draw close with the firm resolve to *be* and *die* a man, to gather ourselves together, body and soul, and keep bravely echoing,—“all good things are ours, nor soul helps flesh more *now* than flesh helps soul.” Of course when the enthusiasm dies we do bitterly laugh both at Browning and ourselves, considering from the *under* side the track which daily meets us. Still we are higher for having been strong an hour and though the first bloody inspiration is gone, the idea itself must remain sure.

Again, how much comfort there is in the thought that we render not to our *peers* our lives, account,—“All *men* ignored in me *this* was I worth to God.”

Inborn in each and all seems the vital need of commendation. With flushed cheek and kindling eye, long ago, our *great house* builded, did we seek our mother's knee, and succeeding years change only for the approving and loving hand, the great world's sordid palm, strong, relentless. Repulsed to the end we strive to seem *good* in our fellows' eyes, or in despair quit our “few days.” Thus we have lived.

How great the change if each one rested content, satisfied that the Great Taskmaster's eye saw and appreciated *all* his struggles and trials and would nothing forget! While the *clang* of to-day is very far from such a pitch still the ever-increasing harmony—Ben Ezra may remove many discords—speaks its attainment by and bye.

“Young all lay in dispute: I shall *know* being old,” is much the same precept that we have continually heard employed since Cicero wrote his “De Senectute.” Though the matter is old, the manner of its appearance effectually relieves it from all tediousness—indeed the combination is so *strong* and *new* it might deservedly earn the heading, “Original Wisdom.”

Possibly in such way Browning gets more than his due—his setting is so unique we forget that after all —*we knew all that before*.

Ben Ezra closes with a metaphor—“that Potter's wheel,” and here the beauty is exquisite. Potter, Clay, Time—the Pitcher shaped neath the tool—*circumstance!* The figure is complete but does our *clay* lie passive? Is the answer that the question—“thou cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel” expects, natural? Browning even a seer is human and will or can it *ever* be in anything human to answer,—“Nothing?” Still all the more it is the sound of a psalm and rings out *above* us in the dark—rings out and on,—“Mistake not thou thy end to quench His thirst” and *will* till the last laggard shall have grasped its burden and higher bells have caught the ears of those who journey.

When we all can live our lives through, firm in our own individuality, proud of our lot and “trustful what He shall do” then, shall we have reached a higher plane—the *ahode* of Ben Ezra. “What I aspired to be and was not only” *then* “shall comfort me.”

RHETORICAL EXHIBITION.

CONSIDERABLE interest has centered about “the fifty” since it first donned the cap and gown. This has arisen partly from the fact that it is the largest class that, as yet, has entered College, and partly otherwise. Our acquaintance with ‘the boys’ as Freshmen was altogether of a private character, consequently it was with no small degree of concern that we watched them, as Sophomores, ascend the rostrum to do Acadia's first public battle. And they were not found wanting. The Exhibition as a whole compared favourably with its predecessors, and this average degree of excellence is especially noteworthy when we remember the large number, and age of many, of the speakers. In her increased proficiency