

one object of causing it to bear fruit in life and action; his insight, his eloquence, and his wit are never employed for their own sakes, but toward this sole end. It is this strong vitality that makes his works read with such answering vital interest.

It is a curious fact that even those who differ most widely from Emerson, those who condemn his teaching, are delighted, stimulated, and strengthened by the burning, instinct thoughts—or insights—that glow on every page. Yet his essays are not easy reading; the reader, to gain anything from them must have all his faculties awake and alert. They are apparently without organic unity; one can begin anywhere without losing a necessary connection, and leave off anywhere, to follow out the train of thought suggested for himself. And for a moment or two snatched from a busy day, in which to plant a germ of thought in the mind to grow by itself, what is so good?

But one thing must in honesty be said of the works of this rare genius. With all their wonderful power to quicken thought, to stimulate action, to inspire fresh and noble purposes, they have not—alas, how could they have?—the element that fully satisfies. For that we must seek another source.

No fair study of Emerson can be concluded without some consideration of his poetry. It was in this that he expressed his innermost self. Its leading value is in its moral tone, not in its musical form. The form, indeed, may be severely criticised. Emerson openly disregarded all rules of versification, little heeding rhymes or metres. It was the substance, not its dress, that he cared for. So we have broken and irregular metres, halting feet, and disjointed rhymes. But they are true poems, nevertheless. Like his essays,

they are insights: like his essays, too, they are pruned and sifted until they are quite as mark-worthy for their economy of language.

He follows Wordsworth,—in truth, if one dare say it, takes a step beyond Wordsworth,—as a poet of nature. He never rhapsodizes, rarely symbolizes, but interprets nature more profoundly even than the earlier master, basing his interpretation upon his own intensely spiritual theory of the being of the natural world. In this department of poetry he is characterized by an intimate, sympathetic acquaintance with that whereof he sings, and a fine simplicity of style. His mysticism and his love of nature are shown in peculiarly attractive form in the closing lines of his well-known poem, "Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home."

"When I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may
meet?"

His poetry is essentially religious and has the calm, earnest tone of all great moral poems. Emotion and passion are conspicuously lacking in it. Emerson was by nature a Puritan, and austere repressed and distrusted extravagant feeling. Even in that beautiful poem, the "Threnody," written on the death of his first son,

"The hyacinthine boy for whom
Morn well might break and April bloom,—
The gracious boy who did adorn
The world whereinto he was born."

Even in this, the sentiment and passion of grief are kept sternly in the background, to bring out their more subtle effects upon thought and character.

Emerson's poetry is all introspective, some of it full of deepest purport. One of the finest ex-