

Long he lived nameless; how should Spring take note
Winter would follow.

And here we may notice a characteristic quality of Browning, his sympathy, namely, his tenderness, we might almost call it, for what is imperfect, for what is limited and incomplete in the individual's life. He is by no means the severe moralist we have in Carlyle, sternly rating every one by his actual performance and its worth to the world. Browning's view of life is in a sense larger, more merciful, more comprehensive. For him there is a soul of goodness in things evil, a perfection in the very imperfection of some lives, a foreshadowing of another existence in which imperfectly rounded lives may be made complete. The Grammarian whom Carlyle would have probably pronounced a Dry as dust, a rhizophagous animal feeding on Greek roots is for Browning a perfectly sufficient type of the ideal struggle in human life.

This catholic, largely benignant, view of life gives a characteristic colour to many of his poems, such as *Fra Lippo Lipp*, *The man in Confessions*, the man in a *Gondola*, but it is in his poem of *Andrea del Sarto* that this merciful and tenderly comprehensive judgment of individual lives finds the finest and subtlest expression. The gentle and amiable nature of Andrea himself, *dolce e buono uomo*, as his biographer Vasari calls him, at once sensuous and spiritual, with what exceeding tenderness Browning handles that gifted but defective nature. Andrea has fallen short of that height to which it might seem he was born, the pinnacle of glory where Raphael and the severe Angelo stand forever; he has failed, too, in many ways, in common prudence and practical decision, his life seems, now that he comes to review it calmly in the autumn of his days, almost a failure in comparison with what it might have been, and all because of weak desires grown into overmastering habits, because, for one thing, the beautiful head of that shallow woman, his wife Lucrezia, that head which is turned idly away, only half listening to the wonderful monologue in which he tells the story of his life. Yet line upon line, touch after touch, Browning unfolds the richness of this man's nature; its aesthetic fineness, its calm intellectuality, its perfect self-judgment free from all vanity and fretful egotism, its humble recognition of superior merit, its fine insight into its own limitations—a noble trait—and its resignation to them.

"We are in God's hand,
How strange now seems the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter; let it lie!"

A dangerous fatalism it might seem in this utterance, yet Browning half hints it is a deeper form of the prayer, "Thy will be done."

The poem ends on the same chord:

No doubt (murmurs Andrea) there's something strikes a balance . . .
What would one have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Angelo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia—as I choose.

Andrea has not attained, never will attain, the height of Rafael, not even in the New Jerusalem, "because there's

still Lucrezia, as I choose," but there is perhaps something more comprehensive, if less elevated in his life.

Here we have a glimpse of Browning's attitude as a moralist, of the ethical principle which underlies his judgment of life.

What is life and how shall we live it? How many thinkers have raised that question in various forms, the question of the *Summum Bonum*, of the True and the Beautiful, of the Idea of the Good, of Pleasure, of Duty, of Humanity, of the happiness of the greatest number. Each moralist takes his line and reprehends Pleasure with Plato and Carlyle, or exalts it with Aristippus and Diderot.

Browning does not answer by any formula. Life he seems always to say ought to be lived according to the direction in which your greatest capacity for living lies, and so lived, he seems audaciously to add, at all hazards. Hence he is apt to justify a life as long as it is lived freely according to the deepest instincts it contains. Life is its own reward if you are strong enough to live according to the real instincts of your being and not according to conventional standards.

COLLEGE NEWS.

THE FRESHMEN.

A PERUSAL of back numbers of our COLLEGE JOURNAL shows that, until recently, when Freshmen were mentioned at all it was generally in connection with something that violated the rules of the *Concursus*. Indeed not long ago they used to marshal themselves in battle array and endeavor to intimidate their seniors by brute force. Now all this is changed. The *Concursus* is unheard of, and the class of '93 is acknowledged to be exemplary for all that is decorous. In order to encroach as little as possible on the time of the Alma Mater Society, they have, with characteristic modesty, formed among themselves an organization for developing their debating powers, and the progress they are making is quite wonderful. On the 17th inst. a Mock Parliament was duly formed under the leadership of the "foot-ball hero," Mr. W. R. Grant. Mr. J. W. Maclean being unanimously elected Speaker, business was immediately commenced, and the Speech from the Throne read to a full house. After an able discussion the speech was adopted. Next session was held on the 24th inst., when a bill on the Chinese question was introduced by the Minister of Customs, etc., Mr. Fraser. It excited a very lively debate, in which members displayed an enthusiasm which had occasionally to be checked. The House adjourned till Monday following, the same subject to be then continued with renewed vigour. The Opposition is led by Mr. Stewart. "The College am a-moverin' along."

THE CHANCELLOR UNDER FIRE.

We may well be proud of our Chancellor. He does good by stealth, and even when his good deeds are discovered, we feel that we have no right to publish them. But sometimes they cannot be hid. Here is one which the *Ottawa Citizen* has snatched from oblivion, in recording reminiscences of the violent social and political up-