

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

IN our proposed plan of sketching the lives of those poetesses about whose brows the immortal bay boughs have been wreathed, we feel that to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the sweet metaphysical songstress of our own generation, ought one of the foremost places be given. At an early age she became conscious of her ability as a writer, and gave her first article, an "Essay on Mind," to the public. This was shortly followed by a volume of poems "Prometheus Bound," which although admired now, met with little success on its appearance, and the authoress herself characterized it as an "early failure." The "Seraphim" is a lyric drama, and in its scope is given for her bold imagination and the wonderful power she possessed of embodying her emotion in her writing. The effect of the spectacle of the Cross upon the angels is described in forcible style, deeply tinged with the metaphysical of her nature. She indulges deeply in speculation, and has most original ways of viewing things. The drama of "Exile" is written somewhat after the style of the "Seraphim," but it cannot be said to be a successful work. The sweeter and more tender side of her nature is revealed in shorter poems, such as "Isobel's Dream," "My Dove," and "He giveth His Beloved Sleep."

We cannot regret the illness, which quieted for a time her active duties, and gave opportunity for thought, which, deepened by the silent companionship of the poets and philosophers of ancient Greece, has come down to us with a beauty thrilling our hearts as we read. "Aurora Leigh" is considered her most beautiful poem, and truly the wonderful charm of her writing is irresistible in this. While the studious mind was framing and the fair fingers tracing the lovely design of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," we wonder if the idea ever presented itself to the dreamer's heart, that the greatest event of her life would come through the simple medium of verse. As a gentleman, Robert Browning came of course to acknowledge the compliment paid him so delicately in the poem by Miss Barrett. Their acquaintance ripened into mutual esteem and love and resulted in their marriage in 1846.

Mr. and Mrs. Browning decided upon Florence as their residence, and in this city was composed her "Casa Guidi Windows," a poem giving the political and social aspects of Italy, a country to which Mrs. Browning was deeply attached.

To know and appreciate this poetess we must be conversant with all her works from "Prometheus Bound" to "The North and the South." The flowers of eighteen summers have bloomed over the grave of this logical poetess, who combined so charmingly the distinct characteristics of the masculine understanding and the feminine heart. Very few have shown themselves so capable of considering and treating the deep problems which have engaged the attention of the most practical minds as has Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The crowning glory is that this stern work has left the refined heart un sullied and not detracted one iota from the sweet purity of noble womanhood.

CLIPPINGS.

"ABOUT the greatest tail-bearer I know of," said the farmer's boy, "is our old peacock."

AN old lady seeing a sign over the door of an umbrella shop, "Umbrellas recovered," went in and told the shopman that she would like to have him recover for her the one that was stolen from her the week previous.

A MODEL ESSAY.—When young Aime Maillard was at college the professor of rhetoric gave the class as a subject, "A Eulogy of Indolence."

On the given day the compositions were handed in, and the professor, after casting his eye over the papers, remarked :

"M. Maillard, where is your essay? I don't see it among these."

"Didn't I hand it to you? I beg your pardon," said the student, and passed up a neatly folded package of manuscript.

The professor opened it, turned over the pages, got very red, and exclaimed :

"Sirrah, this is a miserable joke. This paper is a blank—not a word in eulogy of indolence anywhere on it!"

"O, I thought the highest eulogy of indolence I could give," replied the student, "would be not to write anything."