

lines together—in them their author seems to us to have once for all proved his hand. They have no purple passages, and none without interest and beauty; they rely more on soundness and lucidity than on scattered felicities of style, but the metre is varied successfully throughout, and the reasoned order of the thought is matched by the certainty of the touch; every line, beautiful or not as you will, is evidently the work of a man who knows his art and can draw his curve with unfaltering skill. But these are minor merits: the poems must stand or fall by the imagination which gives them life. Of this they will speak for themselves; and they will speak, too, to all thoughtful readers, of a civilisation older and greater than our own; of a culture that still comes far nearer to the heart of life than any of the hasty, unreal and boastful systems by which barbarian generations have thought to supersede it.

II

In a country garden far away grows a strange laburnum tree, bearing blossoms golden and pink and white. It is not nearly so beautiful as the common laburnum—it would never be liked so well. Certain unpopular poets resemble this tree. The flowers of their genius are not all golden; and though they may be more unusual than these that are, there is something apart from nature about them, something that half repels by oddity. Such a poet was George Darley, whose best work has of late been gathered together by Mr. R. A. Streatfeild, and republished in a charming little volume,¹ with a frontispiece taken from "The Followers of Bacchus" in the British Museum. The notes are capricious. Why should it be necessary to explain such words as "shepherdry," "Panacee," "enorm," when such words as "prore," "resty," "meiny," and "foundless" are left to look after themselves? The Intro-

¹ A Selection from the Poems of George Darley. Methuen & Co. 1s. 6d. net.