

copy in the thoughts of men, we cannot fail to have our best faculties stirred by the spectacle of an enthusiastic nature remaining courageously and unswervingly true to its own highest aspirations, and resolved to employ every energy in the sacred task of recording them in some form, however inadequate, upon the page of the world's history.

The works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning are so evidently subjective that some analysis of her character becomes necessary in order to understand them. In the preface to an edition of her earlier poems she informs us of the way in which she viewed them: "Poetry has been as serious a thing to me as life itself, and life has been a very serious thing. I have done my work so far as work: not as mere hand and heart work, apart from the personal being, but as the *completest expression of that being* to which I could attain; and as work I offer it to the public, feeling its shortcomings more deeply than any of my readers, because measured by the height of my aspiration; but feeling also that the reverence and sincerity with which the work was done should give it some protection with the reverent and sincere." No wonder, then, that her sensitive pulse throbs in almost every line of her poetry, and that, as we read, we seem to see her pale face white with thought, her eye kindled large with intense emotion, her hand trembling in its eagerness to transcribe the records of her inmost soul. Stirred as she was to the depths of her being, her tireless energy exposes all her faults and failings, and her spirit-glance does not always find a fitting reflection in words. Like the inspired Pythoness, who sometimes grew incoherent under the frenzy of the Delphic god, her thoughts flash out in the zigzag of the lightning, rather than with the clear, steady radiance of the star. As far as style is concerned, she is curiously uninfluenced by some of her Greek models; for it is impossible to be classically statuesque, when the heart is pouring forth its passionate refrain with groanings that cannot be uttered.

There is something profoundly inspiring in the picture of this fragile girl confronting with such immovable resolution every obstacle which stood in her path, and boldly fighting out the battle between physical weakness and the immortal strength of genius. Richter somewhere says: "The world does with poets as we do with birds: it darkens their cages until they have learned what they are to sing." In the chamber of a large, dreary London house, whither the family had removed shortly after the "Prometheus" was finished, this young