

ethereal as Shelley. Why the chirrup of joy is conspicuous by its absence, the biography of the poet, when it comes to be written, will probably reveal; though we may have to wait long, as De Vere has to a great extent forestalled the efforts of the biographer by producing a charming autobiography. Yet, while he possesses no little of that singing power which distinguishes the song-maker from the epic poet, it would be improper, and therefore wrong, to deny that the note of apparently spontaneous, inevitable, irrepressible and impeccable music, which true lyrical verse ought to have, is not always and everywhere present in the odes, songs, and stanzas: although he not unfrequently reveals a transitory sense of music, a momentary command of the instrument at once complete and absolute. In other words, his purely lyrical poems are unequal. In this division of his works, the average grade is not bad, and all the poems are informed with much of the spirit of grace and comeliness, sufficiently rare qualities in latter-day poetry that should, I think, secure for them serious and wide-spread attention.

The prevailing high intellectual element of his verse is, perhaps, most in evidence in the Sonnets, and in connection with them it is well not to forget that the sonnet is next to the lyric, the most personal form that poetry can assume. The merits of this very large province of his rhymed poetry are salient and superb. Several of his sonnets have justly been placed by universal assent among the very noblest in the English language. It is impossible to read even the least important of these short poems without being instantly convinced that its author is a thinker who possesses a mind of the comprehensive order. They are all replete with the richest fruits of deep contemplation, a faculty for which enables the poet to versify with tolerable success abstract truth and argument; since contemplation is to most men, when not carried to excess, and under the same modifying condition, to de Vere in an especial manner, the spectacles of the mind, as what we perceive clearly we express lucidly. In his sonnets he is ever precisely what a sonneteer should be, the rigid and chaste literary artist, and his practiced handiwork is throughout clean-cut and chaste like a Greek epigram.

But the bulk of the poet's truly Titanic labors is in blank verse;