

Cultivation is needed as much for those who hear as for those who sing or play, not perhaps cultivation in the same degree, but of the same kind. A lady after performing with most brilliant execution on the piano in the presence of Dr. Johnson, turned to the philosopher and asked him if he were fond of music. "No madam," replied the Dr., "But of all noises I think music is the least disagreeable." The power of hearing judiciously is inseparable from some power of doing, and one of the motives for spreading musical education is to increase the number in the audience of those who can appreciate good music. It should not be substituted for grammar or geography, but will have a better chance if added to these. If a singer comes forward with compass, flexibility and power, such as are combined in perhaps not half a dozen in a century—these qualities being developed by years of training—every musical circle is tormented with an interpretation of his or her songs in which nothing is wanting, but these qualities for which purpose they were written for displaying. If a pianoforte player comes forth, "whose fingers can turn inside out like a glove," every school groans under his compositions. But there is a fine music which has an interest and beauty independent of those who play or sing. No great amount of power or flexibility is required for the interpretation of Handel's songs and oratorios, and in respect to choral music, there is no voice however small its compass or its flexibility which may not be turned to some account.

The presence of good music is the presence of a good spirit; the presence of deep and earnest music is essentially the presence of the deep and earnest spirit who composed it—a presence felt more surely than looks or words could be. There is frivolous idle music and pedantic music, but there is also music which is the outpouring of the hopes, the prayers, the faith, the very lives of men like Handel, Mozart or Beethoven. They could express every whispering emotion, and lend words, we may even say, to every passing mood which stirred their sensitive souls. In the mighty symphonies he gives himself up to passionate outpouring, or to melancholy, whether he jests, dreams, laughs, or weeps he continues always simple and true; no trying for effect, no oddity, no coquettishness, no sentimentality. Even

the greatest thought appears unadorned and unpretentious. There are few great men who can express their noble sentiments without a wish that they could be heard, and who have no cause to dread listeners for the most trifling thing they have uttered; and such is Beethoven. In short, in the affecting strains of men like this we find the way to the inward recesses of their hearts;

"Untwisting all the strains that be,
The hidden soul of harmony."

LOUISE.

MRS. BROWNING.

It has been said that it is almost impossible to form a correct judgment of the writings of a poet who has only a contemporary reputation. We cannot look forward and realize what influence they may have upon the thought and character of succeeding ages, neither can we fully estimate their influence on our own age, for that influence can be truly felt only by its results for good or ill, and those results come but slowly. But at least we have the privilege of giving our own views of them, and the "proper estimate" to leave to "the succeeding ages."

Among those who stand in the highest ranks of the poetic creators of our own day, we find Mrs. Browning, called by one "that grand-souled patriot." Another has said, "she certainly has given us the sweetest and noblest strains of poetry that have come in the present generation from her sex." We will not stop to give the details of her life, so familiar to all, nor to tell of the influence on her mind of the severe physical sufferings through which she passed in early youth, proving to her a blessing in disguise, as they left her time and inclination to pursue studies far beyond those usually engaged in by women whose time is occupied with the active duties of life. But let us look at a few of her poems, their characteristics, and try to discover and keep for ourselves some of the noble thoughts expressed therein.

Her longest poem, but by no means her best, is "Aurora Leigh," published among her last works, and of which she says herself, "It is the most mature of my works and that into which my highest convictions upon life and art have entered." She has