

Obviously, as has been pointed out, this is a question which must be solved before any complete fusion of the divided communions can be effected. It seems rather absurd for Anglicans to be posing as the mediators among the Churches, whilst they are presenting the most flagrant example of divisions among themselves. Surely it might be possible to think out and work out some scheme of comprehension as well as of self-repression, by means of which wide differences of ritual might be tolerated, whilst certain excesses of personal caprice might be checked. One might say that this is the contribution towards re-union which might well be made by the Anglican Churches. If they cannot accomplish so much, perhaps for the future, in this subject of re-union, "they had better for ever hold their peace."

The immediate work of the non-Episcopal bodies is certainly in the direction of federation. Here there are no differences in regard to ritual. There are no greater differences in doctrine between the two communions than there are between different ministers in the same communion. Well then, it does not seem unreasonable to hope that a certain amount of practical union should be obtained. An excellent example has been set, in this country, by the Presbyterian and Methodist bodies. Perhaps it is too much to hope that this process should be carried further at present. But one thing might be done. In villages and among scattered populations one church might be made to do the work which is now being done by three or four contending churches and congregations. If the uniting communions preferred to have the sacraments administered by their own ministers, nothing could be easier. They might do as they do now, go round from district to district, each ministering to his fellow-religionists at the various localities. The crying evil of multiplying religious communities in small localities was forcibly dwelt upon by Principal Grant at the recent meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, and a remedy proposed similar to that which is here recommended. If Christian re-union is ever to be secured, it is in these or in some such ways that it must be begun.

WILLIAM CLARK.

BROWNING'S LAST VOLUME.

IN everyday parlance, it should be a melancholy duty, that devolving at present upon the critic, to appraise the latest collected work of such a departed genius as Robert Browning. And yet, the melancholy is fairly outweighed by the grateful, the reverent, the hallowed. We remember a surely unique career, beginning with that popular poem of easy, fluent, swinging rhyme, the "Pied Piper of Hamelin," increasing in favour upon the publication of "Bells Pomegranates," and "Men and Women," and converging with an ideal marriage to a brilliant apex of fame, only secondary to the pinnacle upon which both the seer and the seer would unhesitatingly place his great compeer, the Laureate. The points which it is possible to touch upon here in that striking career may be summed up in a few words, for it is clearly premature to endeavour to assign to the departed poet the place of a classic while, as yet, his latest volume has hardly been digested, although it is as a classic that his admirers already regard him. Few writers, however, who have found such warm adherents, have also encountered such earnest enemies, and it is his remarkable style, rather than any remarkable cast of thought, which has always won for him attention, if not admiration.

Browning, then, was a great genius, but not one of the greatest geniuses. He was lacking in that universality which stamped Shakespeare and will stamp Tennyson as two of the most original thinkers the world has seen. Like another famous English poet, he wove into everything he wrote his own way of looking at the life of things, his own mode of expression, himself and his beliefs. He could not have created Hamlet, nor yet conceived the stately blank verse of the "Idylls of the King." Yet, his own individuality, being sufficiently intense and original, supplied abundant material for volume after volume of verse that cannot die, and that individuality gave him a place immediately next the graver, more conventional, but still superior eminence of his friend, Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Browning is always human, which implies contradictions, reservations, diffidences, confessions, abasements, conceits. And he chooses oftenest the human spirit and all its workings to descant upon. The poet of nature he is not, although with unerring touch and skilled modern insight he often is singularly felicitous in delineating natural phenomena—more by chance, it would seem, than as part of his self-assigned method. There is one passion which he has sketched in a myriad faultless ways, and that is the passion of Love. And in the treatment of this accident of our nature lies the key to much of his success.

The "passion for a maid," in its simple, pristine—shall we say, old-fashioned—quality, is not the passion which enters so largely into the matchless lyrics, the colloquial, restless, bitter, wilful, questioning lines that reveal so many curious corners of the lover's heart. Modern love then, is the special love which Robert Browning has set himself to analyze, and well and consistently has he performed the task. As specimens of contrasting styles, take the "Gardener's Daughter," and that sustained chant of remorse and self-examination, "The Worst of It." Being in harmony with so much that is essentially a feature of modern love-making, his love lyrics will remain, indelibly associated with the self-conscious revealings of an introspective age.

With regard to the charges of harshness and carelessness, the latter, at least, need never have been made. His lines almost always scan, even if the construction be inverted, puzzling and unusual, and abundant cacophony be thereby engendered, and this fact of their scansion should show that the poet was not careless, though he delighted in revelling in a species of word-puzzle that has frequently, and with truth, been likened to the intricacies of a modern orchestral score. Indeed, should we be inclined to name a twin in the history of art, the name of Richard Wagner alone would rise to the lips.

What then is the message contained in "Asolando" the latest fruit of that eager brain? The "Prologue" is written in the five-lined, two-rhymed stanza the poet much affected and is simply the repetition in another form of Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality." Where the one observes that

There hath passed away
A glory from the earth,

the other writes,

And now a flower is just a flower:
Man, bird, beast are but beast, bird, man—
Simply themselves, uncinct by dower
Of dyes which, when life's day began,
Round each in glory ran.

Continuing in this strain he looks—alas—for the "lambent flame," the same, we know to our cost, that made the

Waters on a starry night
Beautiful and fair;

and even the prosaic every-day sunshine "a glorious birth," but finds it not.

The lambent flame is—where?

Lost from the naked world, earth, sky,
Hill, vale, tree, flower,—Italy's rare
O'er-running beauty crowds the eye—
But flame? The bush is bare.

"Rosny," "Dubiety" are thoroughly Browningsque, but unsatisfactory short poems. "Now" is a thrilling, pulsing, fourteen-lined poem, quasi-sonnet, imperfect bud of passion.

How long such suspension may linger?

Ah, sweet—

The moment eternal—just that and no more—
When ecstasy's utmost we clutch at the core.

But the true Browning is that we meet in the disjointed blank verse of "Beatrice Signorini," and in the daringly far-fetched rhymes of "Flute Music." Throughout the volume is that marked belief in a future life which has ever characterized even the wildest fancies of the poet. In the magnificent poem, charged with electrical thought, full of the subtlest imagery couched in the most complex language, entitled "Reverie," will be found Browning's cult, what he believed, what he looked forward to, and what he most ardently desired. His worst enemy might well be silenced before the clearness, strength and spiritual insight of this remarkable poem.

Many numbers in "Asolando" have evidently been inspired by the poet's choice of Italian surroundings. The American critics—some of them—see in this an eloquent witness to the fact that Browning disliked England, and was "bored by it." This we do not believe to have been the case. He probably preferred the climate, and found many associations there connected with the long residence and death of his wife, while it may fitly be conjectured whether with Tennyson's successful creations of English scenery, traditions and character pervading the reading world, there was really enough material left in his native land for him to work upon. This suggestion may appear ill considered, but a little reflection will show how probable it is that Browning felt his incapacity to deal with England in face of the Laureate's matchless style, "the despair of posterity," and his singularly felicitous and original presentation of English types.

The message of "Asolando" is hope of a future life, cheerfulness even in decay, and unceasing effort towards perfection of mind and soul. There are many who consider that viewed in the light of genius Mrs. Browning was a far more inspired singer than her husband. A comparison of their styles reveals certainly perfect equality in execution if not in conception. Whether "Sordello" or "Aurora Leigh" shall live the longer, who shall say? It seems probable, however, that Mrs. Browning's unique position will be strengthened and confirmed as the years go on. She is one of the very few women who have written "classics."

Meantime, the whole thinking world pays its homage to the departed poet, a kind friend, a devoted father and husband, a powerful and original thinker.

JERSEY ISLAND, the place from which we obtain the favourite Jersey cow, is a small spot of land. If squared, it is $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles each way. Yet this little island has a population of 60,000 human beings, and has over 12,500 cattle, and has had that number for the last twenty years, for the census of 1861 gives 12,037. And yet they export on an average, annually, 2,000 head. Roughly speaking, on this island they manage to support one head of kine to every two acres, while in England there is only one head to every ten acres.

In 1867 it is estimated that there was paid for advertisements in this country over \$10,000,000. The present expenditure is estimated at \$30,000,000. Advertising is now not a matter of choice, but of absolute necessity, as much as to have a store, office, or otherwise to keep before the public. It is an unexpected but natural fact that rates of advertising advance as the circulation of a periodical or paper increases. This increase of circulation, if a large one, and also the degree of reliability and respectability, the intelligent advertiser observes, and acts accordingly, and does not waste his large shot on small birds.

A HEROINE OF NEW FRANCE.

ABOVE the door of the Church of the Congregation, Notre Dame Street, Montreal, is written in French the following inscription: "On this spot was erected by Sieur Bourgeois and Mlle. Le Ber, the ancient Church of the Congregation, 1693."

We are all acquainted with the name of Marguerite Bourgeois; that of Jeanne Le Ber has an unfamiliar sound. Her family is closely connected with the early history of Montreal, and she herself is worthy of notice as a sort of typical figure, illustrating peculiarities of national manner, thought and character.

Her father, Jacques Le Ber, a native of Pistrini, Rouen, was one of the Company of One Hundred Associates formed for the express purpose of founding the new settlement of Ville Marie. Possessing two seigneuries, St. Paul and Senneville, a house in Quebec, another in St. Paul Street, Montreal, with various other property, this French immigrant was considered one of the richest traders of New France. Of a sanguine and energetic temperament, he took a prominent part in the affairs of the new colony. He was an important member of the Militia of the Holy Family, a band of one hundred and forty, in which all the men capable of bearing arms were enrolled for the defence of the colony.

"On all sides," says Dollier de Casson, in his "Histoire de Montreal," "we lived in constant dread on account of the snares set for us by our enemies. If it was necessary to send despatches to Quebec or Three Rivers we had to choose the best canoes and start them off at night. At present it would be difficult to make you understand the extreme precautions they were obliged to take in order to reach their destination quickly and to avoid encountering their foes. M. Jacques Le Ber has in this way rendered valuable services to the colony, exposing himself very often in canoe, on the ice or in the woods, carrying despatches."

The liquor traffic with the Indians was creating many disorders in the country. By his strenuous opposition to these abuses M. Le Ber incurred the enmity of Perrot, then Governor of the Island of Montreal, and during the progress of one of their quarrels was thrown into prison, where, according to the fashion of the day, he languished until, by urgent appeals to France, his friends contrived to obtain his release. According to the accounts that have come down to us, M. Perrot was scarcely so careful to maintain his dignity as might have been expected from a man of his position. In open defiance of the ordinance forbidding the magistrates to engage in trade, he kept a shop in which he sold liquor to the Indians, and in which he did not consider it derogatory to his office to serve as bartender to the savages. It is related of him that on one occasion he sold an Indian his own hat, coat, sword, and even his ribbons, shoes and stockings, receiving in exchange the sum of thirty pistoles. Afterwards the savage was seen strutting majestically about the market place, attired in the Governor's costume, to the amusement and scandal of the whole community.

The French rule was far too stringent, too anxious to control every conjunction of human affairs, to promote public spirit on the part of its colonists. M. Le Ber presents a rare instance of one who was willing to devote some portion of his own substance for the public security. He built a stone fort on his Seigneury of de Senneville, at the head of the Island of Montreal. This was burnt by the Iroquois in 1691, and when it was rebuilt in 1693 was provided with some small pieces of artillery as a defence against the Redskins. In 1701 we find a garrison established there, commanded by the Sieur de Mondion, and a few years later M. de Vaudreuil, Governor-General of Canada, in writing to the Minister of the Marine, tells him that "the fort at Senneville entirely protects the colony on that side from the ravages of the Indians." Jacques Le Ber was ennobled by Louis XIV. in 1696 on account of his services, with the condition that the patent of nobility was to be secured to his descendants.

Jacques Le Ber married Jeanne Lemoyne, sister of Charles Lemoyne, afterwards Baron de Longueuil, and their only daughter, Jeanne, was born at Ville Marie, Jan. 4, 1662. Her godfather was Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve, Governor of the Island of Montreal; her godmother was Mademoiselle Mance, a woman nobly conspicuous among the devoted sisterhood who had consecrated themselves to the service of God in Canada.

It was an age of marvels; the very existence of the settlement was a continual miracle; the routine of daily existence was an unceasing exercise of the most devoted heroism. Cut off for many months of every year from all communication with the outside world, surrounded by pressing dangers and privations, religion was the inspiring principle of this little band planted in the wilderness; the faith was the unrivalled sovereign of her children's thoughts and hearts. The atmosphere was saturated with hairbrained enthusiasm, with wild fancies concerning vigils and visions and penances. A grand and steady aim, never lost sight of, never abandoned, moulded the minds of men into a form entirely congenial to priestly desires and sympathies. All this furnished mental intoxication for an ardent and impressionable nature. Every day the little one was taken to visit her godmother; she was constantly at the Congregational Convent, where Marguerite Bourgeois reigned over a band of heroines of missionary enterprise. The contagion of popular enthusiasm offered a continued stimulus. The girl's whole soul burned with a glowing aspiration—she too would become a saint and a Christian heroine. It would be amusing were it not so intensely pathetic to see the alacrity with which this em-