

Where tyrants rule and slaves repine ;
 Eager to lift religious light
 Where thickest shades of mental night
 Screen the false god and fiendish rite ;
 Reckless that missionary blood,
 Shed in wild wilderness and wood,
 Has left, upon the unblest air,
 The man's deep moan—the martyr's prayer :
 I know my lot—I only ask
 Power to fulfil the glorious task ;
 Willing the spirit, may the flesh
 Strength for the day receive afresh.
 May burning sun or deadly wind
 Prevail not o'er an earnest mind ;
 May torments strange or direst death
 Nor trample truth, nor baffle faith.
 Though such blood drops should fall from me
 As fell in old Gethsemane,
 Welcome the anguish, so it gave
 More strength to work, more still to save.
 And, oh ! if brief must be my time,
 If hostile hand or fatal clime
 Cut short my course—still o'er my grave,
 Lord, may thy harvest whitening wave.
 So I the culture may begin,
 Let others thrust the sickle in ;
 If but the seed will faster grow,
 May my blood water what I sow."

But we have already exceeded the limits we had originally assigned to our notice of Charlotte Brontë and her contributions to the little volume of poems. We pass on to those of Emily. Mrs. Gaskell tells us:—"In the *Athenæum* of July 4, under the head of 'Poetry for the Million,' came a short review of the poems of C. E. and A. Bell," and that "the reviewer assigns to Ellis the highest rank of the three 'brothers,' as he supposes them to be ; calls Ellis, 'a fine, quaint spirit', and speaks of 'an evident power of wing, that may reach heights not here attempted,' also that, 'The poems of Ellis convey an impression of originality beyond what his contributions to these volumes embody.'"

A notice in the *Christian Remembrancer*, written after the death of two at least of the authors, says:—"The poems are remarkable as being the first effort of undoubted genius to find some congenial form of expression. They are not common verses, but show many of the vigorous qualities in the prose works of the same writers." But Charlotte Brontë went beyond this:—"The fixed

conviction I held, and hold," she says, "of the worth of these poems"—Emily's:—"has not, indeed, received the confirmation of much favorable criticism ; but I must retain it notwithstanding."

And we, with the volume before us, in the lamplight's glow, while the wild March winds are wailing and sobbing without, are free to confess to a similar conviction. There is a weird fascination, a passionate, compelling force, in some, and in others a tenderness, a pensive grace, that takes us by surprise in Emily Brontë.

Hers was, we know, a solitary spirit, exulting literally as well as figuratively in the bleak wild moorland, rather than in the smiling valley. Charlotte says of her: "Stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone." We can picture her naturally, as in harmony heart and soul, every chord athrill with the stern sublime of "heights where the north wind is raging," in the "wild Decembers," when the moors and "the deep glens are blocked with snow," when the "wilderling drift" is whirled before the breeze, or shivering with delicious rapture of intensest sympathy,

"In the gloom of a cloudy November,"

When,

"Drenching wet, the cold rain pouring,
 Speaks of winter nigh."

Such moods of nature, sullen or tumultuous, or dreary and chill, seem to us the ones to which naturally we would assign the sympathies of Emily Brontë ; and undoubtedly they did possess for her an attraction, peculiar, irresistible, overpowering ; evoking the strongest emotions of her heart, the fullest homage of her soul. But the tranquil, the serene, had charms for her as well. An example or two will suffice :

"The bluebell is the sweetest flower
 That waves in summer air ;
 Its blossoms have the mightiest power
 To soothe my spirit's care."