

tive. But how could he soar, when there was so much to depress his imagination? He at any rate can touch the heart, and is free from affectation. His greatest poem is his own fascinating character. In the earlier chapters I have taken much pains to detect the germs of subsequent developments; I must not repeat myself. Suffice it here to mention two persons with whom Jeremiah may be profitably compared.

The first is our own Milton, whose greatness both as a poet and as a public man is so inextricably connected with his fervent spiritual religion. There have been few who could more fully enter into Jeremiah's first chapter than Milton (from whom the motto for my own opening chapter is taken), or who have equally experienced that loneliness which fell upon Jeremiah when, as Wellhausen puts it, "the true Israel was narrowed to himself."² Neither was wholly free from the bitterness of strife, but to neither was refused an emancipating heavenly vision. A literary critic has recently said that "the love of country in its most creative and passionate form was the outcome of Puritanism;"³ but the same passionate spiritual ardour which we find in the patriotism of the Puritans existed long before in that of Jeremiah.

But at the close of his ministry I would rather compare Jeremiah with one who was *mighty both in words and in deeds* (Acts vii. 22), and whom a sympathetic poetess has painted perhaps more truly than her sister-artist in prose.⁴ Need I mention his name?

". . . . This was he,
Savonarola, who, while Peter sank
With his whole boat-load, cried courageously,
'Wake, Christ; wake, Christ!'
Who also by a princely deathbed cried,
'Loose Florence, or God will not loose thy soul!'
Then fell back the Magnificent and died
Beneath the star-look shooting from the cowl,
Which turned to wormwood-bitterness the wide
Deep sea of his ambitions."

² "Encyclopædia Britannica," xiii. 417a.

³ *Spectator*, June 16, 1888 (review of Mr. Harrison's "Cromwell").

⁴ Mr. G. W. Cooke well remarks that George Eliot's Savonarola is "always much more of an altruist than of a Christian." Prof. Creighton, I think, would reject the version of Lorenzo de' Medici's death accepted by Mrs. Browning. But the general impression given by the above lines is, I hope, correct.