

# Rouge et Noir.

FORTITER FIDELITER FORSAN FELICITER.

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## TRINITY COLLEGE PRIZE POEMS.

We intend, if possible, to publish in succession the Prize Poems of past years. We have already given last year's, and now present that of 1878 to our readers. We regret not having had the opportunity of asking the author's permission to publish in this instance.

### THE INDIAN SUMMER.

BY R. T. NICHOL.

The warm and wanton summer months had fled  
Loud-laughing o'er the flowers, which 'neath their  
trod,

Yielded crushed fragrance; as the Menad crew,  
Drunk with the Sun-wine, in their chorus flew,  
Or languished faintly and all undone  
In bowers deep hidden from the fire-eyed Sun.

But after these had risen far gentler days,  
In whose brief reign the fields of tasseled maize  
Grew golden; and men toiled throughout the land  
Hoarding the hard full ears; and many a band  
Of workers gleaned the ripe scorched grapes, that  
hung

On burdened vines; and when the orchards flung  
Their broad arms wide, which bent beneath their  
load,

From others yet much mirth and laughter flowed.  
On all the hills the golden-roses grew bright,  
The meadows all with purple asters dight  
—Her royal hem, which, when the Flower Queen  
stepp'd

Forth from her throne-room, still its pavement  
swept.

These too had sped; and now a calmness lay  
Over the ravished earth; and seemed alway,  
As expectation held all things enchained  
While leaves grew hectic, many-hued and stained;  
And swift warm-breasted swallows on the barns  
Made clam'rous twitt'ring; and from dusky tarns  
Hid deep, 'mid cedars, solitary cranes  
Rose seeming-painfully; as shafted flames  
Fell from the westward, and among the pines  
Showed darkness darker with their sanguine  
lines.

Then too might one which wandered by a  
stream,  
Swift-slipping onward 'neath the moon's pure  
gleam,

If noiselessly he trod, have caught a strain  
Of sweetest music, yet so fraught with pain,  
As all best things—as greatest joy with tears,  
As blest S. Catharine's ecstasy with fears,  
As tongue-less nightingales, so legends say,  
Who die with sweetness of the unsung lay.  
But these were voices of the water-sprites;  
Who wondrously throughout the still clear nights  
Talked in the language of the water-world  
In gentlest concert to the brook that purled  
A cadence to them; and the burden seemed—

'Tis coming!—and their fathomless blue  
dreamed

Each in the other's; till they tearfully locked  
Their forms, and idly on the wavelets rocked,  
Murm'ring and watching till the dark grew light  
Watching and murmur'ing till the day grew night.  
And all the while along the wid'ning dales  
And up the hills, and o'er the woolly vales,  
Stole a mysterious vapour, o'drous, dim,  
Tangling itself about each scarce-stirred limb,  
In all the woods; and through its hazy blue  
The sun rose ever of a dull red hue.  
So light it was, so warm, one might believe  
Such were the air that blessed spirits breathe  
In the far soul-land, in those happy isles  
Beyond the sunset, where all nature smiles.  
And so, from that vague feeling of the breast  
Which links to God-head the idea of rest,  
Of glory shrouded in a kindly pall  
Of fragrant dimness—in this peaceful fall  
The Indian thought to see the Almighty Hand  
And cresset, as vapours rolled athwart the land,  
And curled aloft to Heaven without cease:—  
'Our Father smokes his calumet of peace!'

So the days waned, and 'neath the dreamy  
power

Of the warm air, made lovelier every hour  
The leafy robe of nature; while the hush  
Grew deeper; and all crimsoned with the blush  
Of evening rose those mists as though it were  
The Vespers of the world; and breathing prayer  
The Spirit of the Earth, in priestly robe,  
Stood offering incense: using the vast globe  
As altar-steps to Heaven; while all fell  
Adoring; and alone the grateful swell  
Of thousand human hearts throbbed up on high  
In Heaven-beard accents to the gates of sky.

And then the end: the vestments laid aside  
—Their golden 'broid'ries rustling as they glide  
Down to the priestly feet—the chanting o'er;  
The censor thrown upon the Temple floor,  
Scatt'ring its ashes to all winds that blow,  
Those dead, white ashes, which we men call—

FINIS.

### AURORA LEIGH.

BY R. T. NICHOL, B.A.

It might seem presumptuous, at so  
late a date, to venture anything, either  
in praise or dispraise of the work of  
an authoress so well known as Mrs.  
Browning—well known, that is, in the  
unchallenged power of her genius, not,  
I am afraid, in the general perusal of  
her works. It is the latter fact which,  
perhaps, may palliate this attempt.

She always appears to me to repre-  
sent one phase of the genius of the  
Renaissance—in this poem more than  
any. It is not alone in her devo-

tion to Italy—to Florence—Dante's  
Florence, DaVinci's Florence, the city  
of Michael Angelo and the Medici;  
but in her sympathy with some of its  
broader and more subtle characteris-  
tics, which we shall discover before  
long.

In the preface to this book she  
styles it "the most mature of my  
works, and the one into which my  
highest convictions upon Life and Art  
have entered."

Now, the first of these "convic-  
tions" is that which the "men of the  
new learning" most earnestly con-  
tended for—most passionately pro-  
claimed—the utter good, the real  
worth of human-nature. God's Image,  
they maintained, was indelibly stamped  
upon it; blurred, worn smooth, almost  
unintelligible, still it was there. It  
was upon this assumption that Sir  
Thomas Moore—the noblest of the  
school—not hopelessly, not aimlessly,  
we feel sure, as a castle in Spain,  
built that scheme, "which," says Mr.  
Ruskin, "too impatiently wise, became  
the bye-word of fools."

And out of this grows the convic-  
tion of the necessity of Art to Life—  
true Art to true Life. Hear her plea  
for poets:—

" . . . What's this Aurora Leigh,  
You write so of the poets, and not laugh?  
Those virtuous liars, dreamers after dark,  
Exaggerators of the sun and moon,  
And soothsayers in a tea-cup?"

"I write so  
Of the only truth-tellers now left to God—  
The only speakers of essential truth,  
Opposed to relative, comparative,  
And temporal truths; the only holders-by  
His sun-skirts, through conventional grey glooms,  
The only teachers who instruct mankind,  
From just a shadow on a charnel wall,  
To find man's veritable stature out,  
Erect, sublime—the measure of a man,  
And that's the measure of an Angel, says  
The Apostle."

This is her Ethics: not so thinks  
her cousin, Romney Leigh. A soul  
quite fearlessly honest, and loathing  
all shams and masks; utterly pitiful,  
too, of all that mass of human misery  
and sin, he sets himself to right it  
by cold, formal rules. Repressing all  
spontaneity, he moulds himself to a  
strict disciple of Fourier's. He would  
live, love, spend and be spent for  
other's good, but all by rule.