

him to be called a genius; then, either this particular critic's standard must be ideally high, or he wishes us to believe that his own mental comprehensiveness is so great that Mr. Lowell has said little or nothing that is new to him, or that he (the critic) could not have said much better himself. Let us be charitable and take the former view. For myself, I am free to confess that in my estimation Mr. Lowell is original, and is a genius of no mean order.

Mr. Lowell has a delicate apprehension of the spiritual essence of common things. He sees in them a beauty and a glory which does not appear to the ordinary mind. His works are evidence of the truth of his own saying that

'All things have within their hull of use
A wisdom and a meaning which may speak
Of spiritual secrets to the ear
Of spirit.'

And again,

'Outward seemings are but lies,
The soul that looks within for truth may guess
The presence of some wondrous heavenliness.'

As might be expected, Mr. Lowell has written some superior poetical descriptions, although but very of his poems are descriptive throughout. One of these, the 'Summer Storm,' excels any poem that I have ever read on a similar topic. It is intensely, vividly realistic. So also is the following, which is transcribed from 'The Vision of Sir Launfal':

What so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days.

* * * * *

Now is the high-time of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and know right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are green and grass is growing;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted,
That streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by.

Mr. Lowell is an exponent of the purest and loftiest idealism. The world he lives in is not material, but spiritual and ethereal, and its ineffable radiance he strives to reveal to us. All followers of the divinely-human Plato will find in Mr. Lowell a kindred spirit. His intellectual sympathy with Plato is well shown in that exquisite fantasy, 'In the Twilight':

Sometimes a breath floats by me,
An odor from Dreamland sent,
That makes the ghost seem nigh me
Of a splendor that came and went,
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not
In what diviner sphere,
Of memories that stay not and go not,
Like music once heard by an ear
That cannot forget or reclaim it,
A something so shy, it would shame it
To make it a show,
A something too vague, could I name it
For others to know?
As if I had lived it or dreamed it,
As if I had acted or schemed it,
Long ago!

But Mr. Lowell's highest ideal is moral and not intellectual. He holds that "all the beautiful sentiments in the world weigh less than a single lovely action." He regards Truth, not Art, as the province of poetry, and emphatically dissents from the doctrine subscribed by your contributor, Mr. Sykes, that didactic poetry is a contradiction in terms. His own poetic powers were set on fire by moral

indignation at the wrongs suffered by one part of his race from another, and they glow with a fervor that has rarely been equalled. He plainly acknowledges as his purpose

To write some earnest verse or line
Which, seeking not the praise of Art,
Shall make a clearer faith and manhood shine
In the untutored heart.

Among philosophers, Fichte is, I think, the only one who at all resembles Lowell in his intense moral earnestness, and in his enthusiasm for humanity and for truth. Hear him:

'The traitor to Humanity is the traitor most accursed.'

* * * * *

'He's true to God who's true to man, wherever wrong is done
To the humblest and the weakest 'neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race.'

We boast of the glory of the British name, of our flag, and of the victories that have been won under it during many ages and in many lands. But what infernal iniquities most of these victories were will appear to those who have realized the spirit of the extract just given.

Moral courage in every form wins from Mr. Lowell the highest eulogiums:

'To meet
Wrong with endurance, and to overcome
The present with a heart that looks beyond,
Are triumphs.'

And again he defines success to be

'The inward surety, to have carried out
A noble purpose to a noble end,
Although it be the gallows or the block.'

But for moral cowardice he manifests the intense scorn of all sincere natures:

'They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.'

* * * * *

Those love (Truth) best who to themselves are true,
And what they dare to dream of dare to do.'

As might be expected, Mr. Lowell is no friend of the modern tendency of glossing over moral iniquities by agreeable euphemisms:

'Let us speak plain; there is more force in names
Than most men dream of; and a lie may keep
Its throne a whole age longer, if it skulk
Behind the shield of some fair-seeming name.'

The continued existence of many forms of wrong and injustice Mr. Lowell traces to that blind admiration of the past which is so prevalent among men. But to him the Past is only valuable in so far as her course coincides with the teachings of Reason and of Truth. He declares that

'The foolish and the dead alone never change their opinions.'

And again,

'New times demand new measures and new men;
The world advances, and in time outgrows
The laws that in our fathers' day were best.
Therefore think not that the Past is wise alone,
For yesterday knows nothing of the Best.
Upward the soul forever turns her eyes.
The next hour always shames the hour before,
One beauty at its highest prophecies
That by whose side it shall seem mean and poor;
No God-like thing knows aught of less and less,
But widens to the boundless Perfectness.'

I close these articles by three quotations, which show the sub-