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## INFLOWING TIDE.

I crossed the bridge that spanned a river wide  
Where vacant flats beneath the smoky day  
Stretched wide and far, in mire the brown weeds lay,  
And outward with the stream's fair hope did glide ;  
But ere I passed again, the flowing tide,  
From moon-stirred ocean up the long blue bay,  
Between the slime-green piers poured lavishly  
And all the wide blank wastes were satisfied.

Thus void my heart a desolate expanse  
Doubt strewn and sad, of hopeful joy deplete  
Till happiness upwelled at thy first glance—  
Yea, Friend, 'twas rapture thy dear self to greet,  
And though for God we work in ways apart  
Joy tides at every meeting to my heart.

## MOONLIGHT.

So tremulous the fire of thinking burns  
Beneath mine eyelids that I may not keep  
My restless couch ; I watch the still moon sweep  
Through starry space, like some white soul that spurns  
Earth life, and to the sunlight ever turns ;  
In her cool beams my burning eyes I steep—  
O that my spirit thus may rest in sleep  
When my pale ashes Mother Earth inurns !

And as moonlight doth quiet mine unrest  
Changing thoughts' scorching glow to truth's pure light,  
So thou who art my heart's own holy guest  
Dost make its ruddy flame glow spirit-white ;  
And like pure-hearted child 'mid happy dreams  
I rest my heart and soul in thy love beams.

WILLIAM P. MCKENZIE.

## PROF. ALEXANDER'S INTRODUCTION TO BROWNING.

Professor Alexander comes to his new position in our University highly recommended by his recently published "Introduction to the Poetry of Robert Browning." It shows, in general, that the author is a man of wide reading, combined with closeness and clearness of observation, critical fairness and lucidity of expression ; and, in the particular consideration of Browning's poetry, evinces a keen power of analysis, directed to the elucidation both of the poet's merits and of such defects as he is admitted to have. The work, as the preface tells us, "consists largely of extracts, accompanied by careful analyses and a copious critical commentary," by the help of which the author hopes to induce a wider study and a deeper appreciation of a poet, "who is, at first, confessedly difficult, and somewhat repellent." It need scarcely be said

that the object of the succeeding pages is to show that it is only "at first" that the charges made against Browning's style and matter can be entertained, and that their foundation disappears with study and reflection. We shall not express an opinion as to how far the author convinces us that the place he gives to Browning is not too high, but shall content ourselves with briefly pointing out the way in which his duty is performed.

The work commences with a thoughtful consideration of the poet's "General Characteristics," in which are pointed out his intense subjectivity, his devotion to psychological analysis of character, his "widespread and unprecedented interest in the inner life," his subordination of outer action to the inner drama of the soul, and the consequent appropriateness of his peculiar method to the purposes to which it is adapted. In the second chapter, his philosophy (and his Religion) are dwelt upon, his axiomatic belief in God, Christ, and individual immortality, his contempt for Positivism and Materialism, his serious view of life, and that deep-seated view of man's duty as a constant striving to attain divine perfection which makes his work so serious, and so often carries him into those clouds of lofty abstract metaphysical speculation which we are often tempted to believe to be less inherent in the subject than the production of the poet himself. Chapter three shows the poet's undoubting and intensely-serious belief in Christianity. Chapter four deals with his "Theory of Art," as elucidated partly by Browning himself in his "Essay on Shelley," and shows how the view, that the artist "lifts his fellows, with their half-apprehensions, up to his own sphere, by intensifying the import of details, and rounding the universal meaning," finds practical illustration in such poems as "Sordello," "Andrea del Sarto" and the "Epistle of Karshish." Chapters five, seven and eight treat of the poet's development as a poet, and go to show that the works of Browning can be understood in their true meaning only when studied chronologically and as the fruits of a gradual mental development. Chapter six is a skilful analysis of "Sordello," which can be done justice to only by a thorough reading. It was a bold task to attempt a justification of Browning against his critics through the very poem which has been the most universal object of criticism, and which even admirers of Browning, such as the author of "Obiter Dicta," confess to be obscure and difficult. It is a task which Prof. Alexander has shown himself not unfit for.

Little attention is paid in this work to adverse criticisms of Browning's style. Many such there have been, from elaborate philosophical analyses down to such mocking gibes as are well illustrated by the remark of a cynic who, in speaking of "The Grammarian's Funeral," observed that it was a pity the author had allowed himself ever since to remain under the delusion that he had buried, not only the Grammarian, but his grammar also. Many think Browning often too much of a "verbal acrobat," often designedly obscure, confused, diffused, incongruous and inconsequent in arrangement. This Prof. Alexander, though scarcely admitting it, explains by the theory that for Browning poetry is but "a form of activity," a "means of realizing his own individuality." Hence the imperfection of his work ; he wrote for the satisfaction of himself and what was in him, not for the satisfaction of others, or of artistic requirements.

But further analysis of this work is impossible here. We repeat, however, that Prof. Alexander's treatment of his subject is well calculated to produce the results which his preface alleges to be aimed at.

W. F. W. C.