

Notches on The Stick

Dr. Mudge has not followed the example set by some recent compilers, nor has he given us a book without reason. His "The Best of Browning" is truthfully, as well as euphoniously entitled; and in it he has done excellent service to the average reader, who certainly needs a mentor and a judicious amount of elucidation when he undertakes this most difficult of poets. The text of his noblest pieces is frequently obscure, and the scope of the whole is not easily discovered, even by the practised reader, until repeated attempts have been made, without just such helps as Dr. Mudge gives us. His annotation observes the golden mean, of neither too much nor too little,—for many of us have no objection if that is pointed out which a little prolonged attention might have enabled us to find for ourselves; while the introductory papers, without being ultra in scholarship or criticism, give me a presentation of the characteristics of Browning, and the special advantages to be derived from a study of his work, easily to be understood by the general public, to which he appeals.

Of this great poet, as of no other, it must be said,—Approach him wisely and with forethought. His poems are not always simple songs, put profound studies—as the greatest works "in prose or rhyme" according to their measure, are. As in the study of the sciences, or of mathematics much depends on our point of commencement, as well as the diligence and faithfulness of our study. It is the elementary parts you have to deal with. When you undertake Browning this rule should be observed, if you are to find in him the attractive and intelligible; from the simple you must proceed to the more complex, and from the briefer to the more protracted studies. Thus you will acquire your rick and the key by which you may unlock the stores of treasure that abound in no other, unless we except Shakespeare, more than in this Author. For the earnest beginner who believes Browning has where, with to reward his search, there is no better guidebook, as we believe, than this volume.

Following the "Introduction," supplied by Dr. Kelly,—who, by the way, is one of the most accomplished writers in [the Methodist church of to-day—we have a biographical essay, giving especially that position of the poet's life which bears direct relation to his work. Dr. Mudge follows mainly the footsteps of Mrs. Sutherland Orr, the biographer of the poet are clearly shown! Though other authorities are freely quoted. Several distinctive facts in the life of the poet are clearly shown. His allegiance to truth; his social and domestic fidelity; his devotion to the sanctities of his art; and the sedulous development of his individual power, undeterred by censure or blandishment. His ideal union with Elizabeth Barrett discovered to us what marriage may be; how lover-like a husband may remain, and how the joyfulness and blessedness that we suppose the peculiar halo of a honeymoon, may continue through a whole lifetime. She became the inspiration of some of his noblest poetry, though much of it was written after his heart had been buried in her grave. How like a bower which angels inhabit was the room where she ceased to breathe! She died in her husband's arms at Casa Guidi, Florence, June 29, 1861. "Throughout the long night of the 28th he sat by the bedside holding her hand. Two hours before dawn she passed into a state of ecstasy but she still could whisper many words of hope and joy. 'With the first light of the new day,' says Mr. Sharp, 'she leaned against her lover. Awhile she lay thus in silence, then softly sighing, 'It is beautiful,' passed like the windy fragrance of a flower.' If anyone wishes to learn how she cherished her memory, let him read the lines commencing,

"O lyric love! half angel and half bird;" if anybody would know how he longed to meet her again, let him read, "Prospect."

Of Browning's physical appearance we read in the words of Hillard: "His countenance is so full of vigor, freshness and refined power that it seems impossible to think that he can ever grow old. His poetry is subtle, passionate and profound, but he himself is simple, natural and playful. He has the repose of a man who has lived much in the open air, with no nervous uneasiness, and no unhealthy self-consciousness." Of him in his youth Macready declared he looked more like a poet than any man he ever met. "His head was crowned with wavy, dark-brown hair. He had singularly expressive eyes, a sensitive mobile mouth, a musical voice, and an alertness of manner so that he was like a quivering, high-bred animal.

Biliousness Hood's Pills

Is caused by torpid liver, which prevents digestion and permits food to ferment and putrify in the stomach. Then follow dizziness, headache, insomnia, nervousness, and, if not relieved, bilious fever or blood poisoning. Hood's Pills stimulate the stomach, rouse the liver, cure headache, dizziness, constipation, etc. 25 cents. Sold by all druggists. The only Pills to take with Hood's Sarsaparilla.

He had a fine head and a noble, leonine countenance."

In his article entitled, "How to read Browning," the essayist points out more definitely the aims and characteristics of Browning. He would not advise the student of his works to begin with "Sordello,"—a production concerning which such critical phrases were formerly employed, as,—"a melancholy waste of human power," "a derelict upon the ocean of poetry," "a magnificent failure," but of which a later and more discerning, perhaps declares, that it is "dark with excess of light." But Dr. Mudge is constrained to admit the inequality of his work, and is not disposed to credit its defects with any sort of plenary inspiration. "His short poems contain his most flawless poetry, but in all the longer ones there are many gems of purest water that can readily be rescued from the surrounding dross." "With such gems we have in this volume a well-filled cabinet.

Dr. Mudge has summoned an array of witnesses, not only to the poetic excellence of Browning, but to the moral and ethical quality of his work, and the gracious influence it radiates. It is profoundly human and christian. "The significance of Browning in literature," testifies Rev. W. J. Dawson, D. D., "is that he is a strong, resolute believer and teacher who, amid the sick contortions of a doubting generation, has abated no jot of heart or hope." Miss Dorothea Beale says,—"We love Browning for his great thoughts and high enthusiasm, for his faith in God and man and woman;" and Mr. William Sharp declares,—"he has enriched our English literature with a new wealth of poetic diction has added to it new symbols, has enabled us to inhale a more liberal air, and has above all raised us to a fresh standpoint, a standpoint involving our construction of a new definition." "He won his audience finally," says Mr. George E. Woodberry, "by this fact, that he had something to say that was ethical and religious. The higher interests of man pre-dominated in his work. Life is the stuff to make the soul of, he says." And Mr. Hamilton W. Mabre: "No English poet ever demanded more of his readers, and none has ever had more to give them. Since Shakespeare no maker of English verse has seen life on so many sides, entered into it with such intensity of sympathy and imagination, and pierced it to so many centres of its energy and motive. No other has so completely mastered the larger movement of modern thought on the constructing side, or so deeply felt and so adequately interpreted the modern spirit." And Dr. Mudge: "The religion of Browning is as simple and natural and robust as his physical health. . . He firmly held to the unity and continuity of life, also to its relativity. He would judge it not by hard and fast rules so much as by the consideration of circumstances, seeking for and finding the faint spark of soul even in those so low and deformed that development appears hardly to have started. Thus is born a tolerance and catholicity all comprehensive, and a charity so large as wellnigh to have for its motto, 'Who understands all forgives all.'" Dr.

Kelley in his "Introduction," cites "an eminent congregational minister," who, "being asked if he took any notice of current poetry, answered: 'No: I have not time. I read no poet any more except Browning. I read him for his strong condensation, his dramatic quality, and his immensely tonic force.'" The testimony to Browning's quality may be respected, but not the exclusiveness of such a practice. No catholic mind will confine itself to one poet, and no mind, catholic or otherwise, will get its best result from such a restriction.

"The Benefits of Browning Study" is an essay most suggestive, especially to the preacher. These advantages are; the enlargement of his vocabulary; the enhancement of his style in vigor and beauty; the stimulation of his imagination and the enlargement of his emotion; the increase of his knowledge of human nature; the tightening of his moral grip; the strengthening of his religious faith; his familiarity with the wholesome and charming character of the poet. Dr. Mudge deals with each of these advantages in a manner altogether admirable. One cannot read this essay without profit. He closes with the quotable tribute of Dr. Alexander McLaren: "In wealth of genius, in loftiness of reach, in intensity of creative imagination I know of nothing to compare with the highest work of Browning. The crowd of women, alive and tingling to their finger-tips, whom he has made, are only parallel to Shakespeare's. There is nobody else that can stand beside him." And Owen Meredith has voiced the feelings of all who are best fitted to pronounce judgment, when he writes of him as one

Than whom a mightier master never
Touched the deep chords of hidden things;
Nor error did from truth dis sever
With keener glance, nor make endeavor
To rise on bolder wings!
In those high regions of the soul
Where thought itself grows dim with awe."

The following sunny, delicately fanciful child-verses might well be included in some collection such as Whittier's "Child-life in Poetry." Their author we know has the child's freshness of heart, and the brightness of her face always enkindles smiles. Mrs. White of Orono, Me., is prominent in the press department of the W. C. T. U., and in many a good enterprise. The verses appeared in the Youth's Companion:

The Buttercup Dairymaids.

The little ladies of the churn,
They toll the springtime through,
A-churning golden butter from
The rain and sun and dew.

But when the merry June-time comes,
Their labor all is done,
And they pack their tiny butter-bowls
With butter like the sun.

And then they stand in racks and rows,
Their bowls upon their heads,
A-waiting the inspectors, who
Shall soon go through the meads.

And when the child-inspectors come,
Such fun as then begins!
For they test that golden butter
With their rosy dimpled chins!

PERCIVAL V. WHITE.

If we needed a little harmless amusement, and could obtain it by a bit of chaffing, or genial pleasantry, who should forbid? If the daughter of an American multi-millionaire deems it her mission to revive a decayed European title, by the aid of the artificial Hymen, there need be no bitterness in the smile with which we regard her. Gold had its own alchemic spell to refurbish the faded charters of nobility.

"He clung by a name
To a dynasty fallen forever;"
he possessed

"A mere faded badge of a social position;
A thing to retain and say nothing about;"
but she will impart to it the value and importance of solid coin, and give to the tattered, antique relic the gilding of this nineteenth age. Here, then, you have it laid

Two Country Neighbor Girls.



Two country girls—Nellie and Mary—friends and neighbors, and both novices in the work of home dyeing, decided to dye their cream silk blouses that they wore last year a bright shade of Cardinal.

Nellie, who had heard so much of the wonderful Diamond Dyes, bought a package of Fast Cardinal; and Mary, misled by an advertisement puffing up a poorly prepared dye, went to a dealer and bought a package of the color wanted.

The girls did their dyeing work the same afternoon—both confident of success—and hung their blouses out in the air to dry. When dried, Nellie's blouse, dyed with the Diamond Dyes, was a picture of beauty, and filled her heart with delight and pride. Mary's blouse was so muddy, spotty and streaky that she was quite distracted and furious about her failure and loss.

Moral: Avoid all poor and imitation dyes that ruin your goods and spoil your temper. The Diamond Dyes are the only reliable, and invariably give success.



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down in the page of one of the brightest and gentlest of correspondents:

"Oh, I believe I promised to explain The Lady Eleanor episode! you might never have suspected it, but we are a titled family and have the added grace of knowing how to squeeze the orange of life to the last drop of celestial nectar. In other words we have so many innocent ways of enjoying ourselves that it is a common remark with our neighbors, when they drop in and find us in high feather,—'you people always have such good times.'" Two years ago I chanced to read an article, written by some English socialist, in which he made the statement that it would be quite easy to make titles so distasteful that those born to such honors would utterly decline to claim or acknowledge them. His idea was to have Thomas, Richard and Henry, (Term Dick and Harry), the whole work-a-day world, claim a title and exact its expression whenever addressed by their companions. With Earls following the plow, and Dukes, Baronets and Lord Bishops swarming in every factory and work-shops, a title would become utterly distasteful. Each kitchen and laundry would turnish its quota of Ladies and Honorable Mistresses, and one can really see that particular prefixes would be at a discount.

"I said,"—"Mother dear, it is a splendid scheme, and we turn immediately arrogated to ourselves the most high-sounding titles and patronymics we could get hold of. So our whole family is noble; and as many of our friends and relatives have fallen in with the harmless pleasantry, this little straggling village appears to be a republican refuge for an impoverished aristocracy. Mother is always the Dowager Lady Dietz, and her little green cottage the Dower House; and it is just as easy now, to speak of sister Mattie Jobson, who lives in Parkland, as the Duchess of Parkland; and Sister Lydia Coombes, as the Lady of Coombe Manor,—as easy as (the Hossier would say), 'falling off a log.' You don't know how much amusement we can extract from this idle folly."

The same writer enlivens us with a *tour-de-force* by the great grandsons of veterans, as we presume. "We had the old war-songs and recitations relating to the present, as well as the Civil War, wind up with five-minute speeches from veterans, of whom there were many present. As to the children's work I will only give you one sample. Three little fellows of seven springs, and goodness knows how many falls (a la Twain), took their position in front. They wore red, white and blue sashes, and were liberally frescoed with (swell) American flags.

The Three Admirals.

1st Boy. I'm Dewey. In Manila Bay
I sent the Spanish fleet sky-high,
And from the forths of Cavite
I made the Spanish gunners fly.

2nd Boy. My name is Schley. I'm cruising round
Down in the Caribbean sea;
I should meet Cervera's fleet
You'll hear a good account of me.

3rd Boy. I'm Sampson, and a man of might.
I'm bound for Santiago Bay,
My lads are spilling for a fight.
The Spanish fleet shan't get away.

The point was in the incongruity between their size and their statements."

Henry O Tanner, the colored American artist, painter of the celebrated picture, "The Raising of Lazarus," recently bought for the Luxembourg by the French Government, is the son of Bishop B. T. Tanner, of the African Episcopal church. He was born at Pittsburgh, Pa., thirty eight years ago, and has struggled on his way through discouragement and poverty to fame and high artistic achievement. *Zion's Herald* presents in a striking portrait his well-formed head, and sensitive, intellectual features. His work is stamped with marked individuality, and he is another triumph to which his depressed race may point with proud assurance. Paul Dunbar and Henry O Tanner are prophecies of the to-be.

After the lapse of years we find Owen Meredith's "Lucile," can come successfully through the ordeal of a second or third reading. We have found ourself lingering over the descriptive parts, and in a few instances it seems for vividness and splendor difficult to surpass them. Robert Lytton is yet not quiet forgotten. The Scribners announce a pocket edition of his "Early Poems." *Editions de luxe* of "The Nature Poems" are also on the market, with illustrations by William Hyde.

PASTOR FELIX.

SCROFULA.

"My little boy, aged 7 years and 15 months, was a victim of Scrofula on the face, which all the doctors said was incurable. To tell the truth he was so bad that I could not bear to look at him. At last I tried a bottle of Burdock Blood Bitters, and before it was half used he was gaining, and by the time he had three bottles used he was completely cured. I cannot say too much in recommendation of B.B.B. to all who suffer as he did." JOSEPH P. LABELLE, Maniwake P.O., Que.

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