

single work. In either case, it is a most charming, interesting, and powerfully painted picture. In the South Gallery there are many works of interest to the student—two by Cima Da Conegliano, Nos. 23 and 28; and a *St. Jerome*, No. 62, by Masso Bacrito. In the West Gallery, the beautiful *Virgin and Saints*, No. 107, by Giovanni Bellini; No. 151, *The Marriage of St. Catherine*, by Paolo Veronese; and in the North Gallery, the finely painted and graceful *Portrait of a Lady*, by Lorenzo Lotto.

As regards Venetian Art as a whole, Ruskin tells us that it passed away "by reason of one fatal fault—recklessness in aim. Wholly noble in its sources, it was wholly unworthy of its purpose. . . . No Venetian painter ever worked with any aim beyond that of delighting the eye, or expressing fancies agreeable to himself or flattering to his nation. They could not be either unless they were religious; but he did not desire the religion, he desired the delight. . . . other men used their effete faiths and mean faculties with a high moral purpose; the Venetians gave the most earnest faith, and the lordliest faculty, to gild the shadows of an ante-chamber or to heighten the splendours of a holiday."

A Book of the Week.

WILLIAM WATSON'S POEMS.

Lovers of poetry in England have been moaning at the apparent departure of the poetic muse from our island. Little or no verse of any quality has been published for some time past; and, therefore, it is with feelings of delight, rendered the more keen by delay, that, after the meagre poetic fare on which we have had lately to subsist, we hail the appearance of a very fine collection of poems indeed from the pen of Mr. William Watson. Admirers of his former verses have, it is true, expected great things from his rare and reticent muse, but detractors have hinted in their speeches and reviews that Mr. Watson is not a vigorous or a strongly original poet, and that "the manner is greater than the man"—that is, that his almost faultless style and classical diction cover a certain poverty of thought. Readers of this volume will not agree with their verdict, but will consider that whatever the ultimate judgment of posterity may be upon his verses, there is no possible doubt whatever that Mr. William Watson is a genuine poet, and not a minor poet or a mere stringer of "society jingles."

For instance, his lines to the "First Skylark of Spring" hold their own even when compared with Shelley's and Wordsworth's immortal odes. Mr. Watson's is a sadder, graver note; the joyous spring of Shelley's lark is absent, and the bird's song saddens rather than gladdens the reader. I will not spoil the poem by quotation, but recommend everyone to study it for themselves.

The poem to A. C. Benson contains some fine lines

"Odes and other Poems." By William Watson. 4/6 nett. (John Lane, Vigo Street.)

that are to my mind eminently characteristic of their author. He congratulates his friend in that his life is spent at Eton, where the shadow and influence of former great centuries must be ever present to influence the thought and lives of its inhabitants, and after regretting the incompleteness of the "half-built new age," he says, or rather shall we say chants, the praises of the past in the following noble lines:—

"But changeless and complete
Rise unperturbed and vast
Above our din and heat
The turrets of the past,
Mute as that city asleep,
Lulled with enchantments deep,
Far in Arabian dreamland built, where all things last."

"A Study in Contrasts" describes, with pleasant lines in which every word tells, the "flower of Collie aristocracy"—

"The unwearable curiosity
And universal open-mindedness
Of that all-testing, all-inquisitive nose!"

and the solemn Angora cat who, "throned in monumental calm," scorned the volatile and interrogative dog. Thus, Mr. Watson suggests, does the "Orient Spirit contemplate the Western Soul."

Space fails me to dwell in detail on all the beauties contained in this delectable volume. According to the critics best capable of judging, "The Vita Nuova" is the finest poem in the collection, though (perhaps fortunately for its appreciation as a whole) it does not lend itself to quotation. There are two or three exquisite love songs, notably those entitled, "Tell me not now," and "Lines written in Richmond Park." I do not care so much for "A Protest," and cannot refrain from protesting against a lady's mouth being described as a "rose-wreathed porch of pearl." The sonnet, "Night on Curbar Edge," contains a fine description of night, solitude, and silence, and especially to be admired are the grand closing lines:—

"Solitude, sleepless, listens at Fate's door;
And there is built and 'stablished over all
Tremendous silence, older than the world."

Those are lines, it seems to me, capable of arousing enthusiastic appreciation in even the most captious of poetry critics. How beautiful our English language is, when it is beautifully sung!

I must end this short paper with one more quotation, as I feel sure that the lines cannot fail to give pleasure to all readers.

"Forget not, brother singer, that though Prose
Can never be too truthful or too wise,
Song is not Truth, not wisdom, but the rose
Upon Truth's lips, the light in Wisdom's eyes."

I hope I have given just enough quotations to make all my readers wish for more, and thus constrain them to acquire this delightful volume of verse for themselves.

A. M. G.

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