

## THE ELON COLLEGE WEEKLY

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### IMPORTANT.

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TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 1910

Get ready for Easter examinations, March 15-22.

Mr. Hobbs, the base-ball coach, is working up considerable interest in this great American game.

How about those college songs? We hear some echoes as of approaching springtime life. The fields are growing green with each round of warm sunny days, and the birds are making melodies in the trees. Let college life be "at the spring" and strike the harp and raise the song.

Dont put off reviewing for your examinations until they are on you. The boy in the "crows nest" way up on the foremast of a sea rover sweeps the horizon with his glasses and keeps the captain informed as to approaching vessels or icebergs and thus prevents collisions. Keep the boy in your "crows nest" awake and, if you are sailing through a fog in math., Latin, or some other subject, keep the masthead light as bright as possible. It is possible with such care and precaution to come out March 22 without a wreck.

Perhaps the considerable amount of matter in this issue of the Weekly on Robert Browning may not be interesting to some readers, yet we hope that it may stimulate some to resolve on further acquaintance with this undoubtedly great poet. Browning will likely never be so popular a poet as Tennyson, but if one sticks to a study of him long enough he will get hold of one's deeper powers of sympathy and appreciation. Poetry with him was really the art of imaging forth life. His style is vigorous and seemingly abrupt, but through his verse there runs a mastery of workmanship and art to be found in no other poet of his century.

The tennis courts should be kept busy the afternoons of these occasional fine days. A reasonable amount of sport on the part of every student is a good mind tonic. Perhaps no game amongst us is better suited to all students for this purpose than tennis is. The book-worm should be urged by his fellows to join in vigorously and heartily an hour or two each day in some college sport. Mingling and mixing with one's fellows takes some of the bookishness out of such students and puts life in. And this reminds us, that we have heard, with a degree of satisfaction, that college athletics is coming more and more to be actuated by a spirit of sport rather than by a spirit of professionalism. Professionalism in college athletics has been a blight-nothing short of a blight-on what otherwise would be a real helpful adjunct to collegiate life. Let it be hoped that the spirit of athletics, purely as a helpful sport in Elon College, may be welcomed, fostered and multiplied.

### Halliwell Sutcliffe.

Halliwell Sutcliffe, author of *Mistress Barbara*, *Benedict in Arcady*, *Priscilla of the Good Intent*, etc., is an Englishman, thirty-nine years old, who has devoted himself entirely to literary work since 1893. He has lived in London a little since then, but has spent most of the time in the country. He is particularly fond of depicting the moors and fells of West Yorkshire, and has a keen and intuitive knowledge of moor folk and their ways, which is evidenced in all of his serious work. His keen joy in the beauty of the wind-swept moors and the upland fells reflects itself in delightful descriptions of the scenic environment. Through long years of careful observation, he has come to understand the nature of the moor people and their childlike acceptance of the enfolding power of mother nature. Thus, his characters are invariably true to life, and his backgrounds are faithfully copied from nature.

*Priscilla of the Good Intent* is his newest book. It is a story of fine, high human purposes, livened with humor, and brightened with glowing glimpses of a beautiful country setting.—Book News.

### Robert Browning.

(Continued from page one.)

memory was ever dear to him.

By many Browning is considered the best of English poets. He was more than most poets, in that Fate allowed him to live a life which was in accordance with his spirit and beliefs. He believed that true marriage consists in the mating of minds and souls, and such a marriage was that of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning.

Browning died in 1889, and at his death the world of literature felt the loss. He found a resting place worthy of his life; for, along with England's greatest statesmen and authors, his ashes rest in Westminster Abbey. J. W. Barney.

### Sordello.

If Mrs. Carlyle could not make out whether Sordello was a man, a city or a book, and if Tennyson understood only the first and last lines and pronounced them falsehoods, I am sure it would be a difficult task for me to undertake to read it through. That task I accomplished however, with a sensation of having performed a feat when I had closed with "who would has heard Sordello's story told," and closed the book.

I spent one whole day on the poem, with a determination to understand it. The experience was distasteful enough and the success of the effort moderate enough for me to have no desire even to look at Sordello again while I live. And surely I shall not suppose to find such vagueness in another world.

There are two reasons why I do not get into it: First, because of my ignorance of Italian history, and secondly, because of obscurity in the author's style.

Sordello, to me, is a spirit now visible and now entirely obscured by these ignorances and obscurities. A spirit that Browning has mixed up in a hopeless entanglement of political, military, social and philosophical life, in the effort to make this spirit speak his (B's) own philosophy of life. Among the 6980 lines there are some fine passages. This, from first part of the sixth book, is a good example:

"And, truly somewhat in Sordello's mood  
 Confirmed its spaciousness, while eve  
 slow sank

Down the near terrace to the farther  
 bank.

And only one spot from out the night  
 Glimmered upon the river opposite—  
 A breadth of watery heavens like a bay,  
 A sky-like space of water, ray for ray,  
 And star for star, one richness where  
 they mixed

As this and that wing of an angel, fixed,  
 Tumultuary splendors folded in to die."

Near the end of the second book the following passage gives the clearest conception of any as to what Browning is trying to do in the poem:

"The body, the Machine for Acting  
 Will,

Had been at the commencement [i. e.  
 of Sordello's story] proved unfit:

That for Demonstrating, Reflecting it,  
 Mankind no fitter: was the Will itselt  
 in fault?"

I understand Browning to mean by "Will" man's spirit. The puzzling question with Sordello is how shall I get this "Will," (spirit in me) expressed. At first he tried by living in a world of fancy, and then by getting humanity to "demonstrate, reflect" it like a mirror. Neither of these methods have proved successful. Thus the puzzling question runs through the long poem and Sordello tells a long story of how the "Will" in him strives to find expression in this and in that way but without complete success in any method. It is the experience of every human soul. No man, I believe, has ever been able to give full expression to the "Will," the soul in him, any more than Sordello did.

W. P. Lawrence.

### An Appreciation of Browning.

Browning and Tennyson are probably the two greatest poets of the nineteenth century; but of these Browning is intellectually the stronger. Browning is a great religious teacher.

*As a Religious Teacher.*

He realizes the importance which the

spiritual has above the material; and the idea of personal immortality is most strongly emphasized by him. Aspiration and optimism are the strong notes of his literature: the triumph of right over wrong; the influence of love over hate; the dominance of knowledge over ignorance, and the power of life over death. That God and good will triumph he believes. And Browning's optimism is real because of its being based on the truth which seemed to permeate his whole being of God's allness and His inability to fail. To him, love, in its highest form, is the greatest thing in the world, and through its workings great things are achieved. His attitude towards a deed is, that it is wholly right or wholly wrong.

### His Style.

Browning's style is rugged and indicates an utter disregard of formality in language. He was a monologist and it seemed impossible for him to express his ideas in any other way. We find deep emotion and intense thought in all his work.

### His Philosophy.

In "Rabbi Ben Ezra" is, probably as much of his philosophy as is in any other single poem. In this, he would teach that there is nothing to fear in dissolution, because this life is but a beginning of the next, and that love plays an equal part with power. He would teach us to hope: "The best is yet to be." Man has capacity for things other than the material. He were allied to the beast were his powers of enjoyment limited to the temporal pleasures. Rebuffs are welcomed as the Divine means for shaping the soul's growth. He who aspires is removed from the brute; even though the ambition be not realized, yet progress has been made through the effort, and a lesson has been learned through the experience. There is frequently victory in a seeming failure. Then in old age, as the result of the struggle, it is possible for him to come forth a developed man, a God—in embryo. And in middle life, having proved the past, courage should not be lacking for the future. And in youth, mental and spiritual preparation should be made for later life. God sees the spark of the Divine, that which is often undetected by man, and knows that even this can be used and the life become worth while, so "Look thou not down but up." Browning would have us believe that there is a whole plan for each of us till the end, and if we interfere with this plan we spoil our own lives and interfere with the Divine purpose. But we must think and hope, and live thoughtfully. Life can be viewed from the vantage ground of old age, and the mistakes made and the truths learned may be discerned.

Browning is a great poet because he sees into the needs of our lives, he makes us think, and, above all things, teaches us how to live. An American poet possessing a similar optimistic spirit, is Walt Whitman. Bessie Urquhart.

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