

## THE POETRY OF DANTE ROSSETTI.

BY T. H. HALL CAINE.

*A Lecture read at the Liverpool Free Library,  
January 28th, 1879.*

SOME of Mr. Rossetti's earlier songs, sonnets and ballads appeared first in that little Oxford periodical, which during its brief existence gathered to itself the first flowerage of nearly all the poets of the younger generation. Some of the sonnets, one of the songs, and one of the ballads appeared afterwards anonymously, whether by pillage or by right, in certain American Magazines; from whence they have since been collected, also anonymously, into English compilations of latter-day verse. The first complete edition of Mr. Rossetti's poems appeared in 1870, and the single precious volume which contains all we know of his music and magic, his sweetness and force and subtlety contains poems never before published. "Jenny," "The Last Confession," "Sister Helen," and the greater bulk of the love-sonnets which, wedded together in fusion of high instinct and fine culture, make up "The House of Life," were first published in the edition of 1870. These poems are enough of themselves to determine Mr. Rossetti's final place among poets; but from sheer lack of time, their ardency and harmony, and heat of spiritual life have failed hitherto to take rightful grasp of the popular mind. In two years from the date of publication the poems passed into six editions. Something of Mr. Rossetti's instinct and resolution, of excellence could at once be seen. The refined passion of Shelley; the clearness and radiance of Keats; the severe emotion of William Blake; the weird fervour of Coleridge were mirrored in Rossetti. The august thought and rich affluence of speech in "Lost Days," and "The Burden of Nineveh;" the

world-old harmonies in "The Song of the Bower," and "The Sea-Limits;" the pathos in "Jenny;" the tragic hold of truth and reality in "The Last Confession," and the exquisite ardour and utter union of sensuous love and spiritual passion in "The House of Life," could not fail of immediate recognition. But it is not at first that we get an ultimate analysis of the elements of Mr. Rossetti's poetry. The secret of the scheme of his genius does not reveal itself at once; it is known to us at the beginning, only through the pulsations of feeling which respond to its gracious abundance.

There are many ways in which a poet may be read; and of these the unpractised reader is always certain to adopt the worst. The channel through which usually we come to know a contemporary author is one that makes us peculiarly liable to misunderstand him, or fall short of full perception of his worth. First, we meet in periodical literature with some mention of his name; next, we see some allusion to his work; then we read some citation from his writings, such as touches our imagination with a gentle pressure; afterwards we revolve in our minds considerations of the market value to us of a full and complete acquaintance; and finally we determine to obtain the praise and the pudding that come of utter mastery of the man as soon as opportunity may allow. When then we come to the study of our author we bring with us certain special expectations, evolved by power and individual bias out of the citation we have seen. If by chance, rare and unmerited, we have had struck for us the key to the harmony of his mind it is well. If on the other hand we have caught up, as is most probable, only some stray notes in the fretting, disappointment or even disgust ensues. Poets suffer specially from this feeble and lifeless treatment, and the poets' poets most of all. They ask in their readers a sympathetic attitude of mind, an impulse that is fervent, an instinct that is right. When under other conditions and amidst other influences we mingle discordant tones with languid hand amongst the sonorous fluctuations of their harmonies we complain with peevish irritation that they do not sway the passions we have not got or touch, as with the point of a spear, the problems of life and joys of living we do not know and feel. Attention and intelligence may at any time enable us to grasp the broad meaning of "The Excursion;" but we need to wait the call of

Generated on 2021-01-25 00:12 GMT / https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433081644880  
Public Domain, Google-digitized / http://www.hathitrust.org/access\_use#pd-google

higher faculties, and the infinite affluence of subtler emotion before we can know in the same author the joy

" That in our embers  
Is something that doth live."

By attention and intelligence we may at any time read Pope's "Essay" and Cowper's "Task," and fear the disappointment of no expectation raised upon selected passages, but Browning's "Men and Women," and Tennyson's imperial legacy in *In Memoriam* ask our keenest perception and our highest heat of spiritual life. The reason is not far to seek. We are all endowed always with a great gift for apprehending positive and physical reality; and hence we can always appreciate the work in which the hold of *fact* is firmest. But emotion is liable to become too subtly attenuated for our commoner moods, in creations in which the poet unites to the web of his inventive imagination only whatever of fact is serviceable to the truth of art. And so we may at any time without danger read the poets in whom the deepest thing is philosophy, or romance, or fact; but we must wait and watch, and think and feel, if we would read aright the poets who are poets first; and who because they are poets have had all these things added unto them. If for the rest it is asked when and how the poetry of Mr. Rossetti should be read, I answer—as it was written—lovingly. Life, not art, is the great giver and teacher; we can see only that which we bring with us eyes to see, and without the instinct and impulse, the spirit and sense which life can give art is an idle thing. But when "the world's great heart of rest and wrath" begins first to touch us, art is a fructifier of august thought, a purifier of exquisite emotion. Wait then, the ardent impulse to turn the leaves of these poems. And when the joy of life is strong within us and living seems a beautiful thing, read "Bridal Birth," "The Portrait," and "Love-Letter." When the glory and sweetness of youth and love swell through our aisles of sense like choral airs down Cathedral aisles, read "The Kiss," "Nuptial Sleep," "Supreme Surrender," and "The Song of the Bower." And when something of the sorrow and the bitterness of life overtake its winged joy of youth and beauty, read "Penumbra," "Broken Music," "Death in Love," and "Even So," and listen to the dying wail:—

" Could it be so now ?  
Not if all beneath heaven's pall  
Lay dead but I and thou,  
Could it be so now !"

Again, when the pathos of life comes strongest and love is seen betrayed and youth traduced ; when the "golden ruin of some rich soiled hair" is found, where Rossetti painted it, at the wayside, thrust out from the lap of luxury, into the night of want, desolate, houseless, wet and matted after a pelting and pitiless storm, then read "Jenny."

"Jenny, you know the city now,  
A child can tell the tale there, how  
Some things which are not yet enroll'd  
In market lists are bought and sold.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our learned London children know,  
Poor Jenny, all your pride and woe ;

\* \* \* \* \*

Have seen your coach-wheels splash rebuke  
On virtue ; and have learned your look  
When, wealth and health slipped past, you stare  
Along the streets alone, and there,  
Round the long park, across the bridge,  
The cold lamps at the pavements edge  
Wind on together and apart,  
A fiery serpent for your heart."

When the tragic hold of honour is strongest, and when baffled love sees first the poor bauble to which its soul's soul has been consecrate—and sees "the pity of it"—then read "The Last Confession," and mark the pulsation of severe emotion and torrent of mighty wrath, by whose impulse the exiled patriot slays the child he has nurtured, the woman he has loved, after the unpitiful light of the harlot's glance flashes from her eyes and the harlot's coarse, unlovely laugh rings from her lips :—

"Father, you heard my speech and not her laugh ;"  
But God heard that. Will God remember all ?

Finally, when the mysteries of faith sound deepest, when destiny of race seems blindest, turn thoughtfully the pages of "The Burden of Nineveh," and follow the Bull-god from its first unearthing in Nineveh to where—

"Some tribe of the Australian plough  
Bear him afar,—a relic now  
Of London, not of Nineveh."

I repeat, there is but one way in which to read truly the poems of Dante Rossetti, and that is to read them as they were written. They were not the outcome of a single inspiration. They are the garnered fruits of many a harvest. They came from the many moods of their author's second self, which, though possibly of higher aptitudes, was long hidden behind the energetic person

of its successful painter-brother. They are, as Professor Dowden has said in another connection, the work of the *elder* brother who with high traditions of soul is living upon his little patrimony, secluded, meditative, thinking his own thought, dreaming his own dream and letting the world go by. They are the labour of love and more than twenty years. "Jenny" was begun in 1850, when Mr. Rossetti was twenty-two years old, and finished in 1861. The intervening period saw the creation of a picture of kindred theme, and the poem caught something from the picture, and the picture took something from the poem. Throughout ten years, when the mood was strong upon him, this great work was touched by the light hand of the master. "Last Confession" occupied 1853, and "Sister Helen" 1858. The love-sonnets covered almost the twenty years between 1850 and the date of the volume. Truly, these poems are the outcome of long and loving labour, and in order to be valued to the full measure of their worth should be read as long and lovingly. They should, too, be read, as far as may be, by the light of the sustained ardour that produced them. Only so may their native flowerage be seen. But where the even current of men's lives knows nothing of the fluctuation of their subtle emotion, the charm of their art and magic will not fail. After the high pressure of serious labour they bring clearness and brightness and glow, and their pure beauty haunts again the heavier hours with the radiance of its presence.

And now I wish to traverse hastily a few general considerations on two aspects of Mr. Rossetti's genius. First, a few thoughts on Mr. Rossetti as an artist. The volume of his poems contains songs, narrative pieces, ballads and sonnets. We will glance at each of these in what I conceive to be the rightful order in which I have written them. Every poet should be first a singer; song should be the basis of his art. It is idle to urge that some poets who have attained excellence in sustained and elaborate forms of verse, have been deficient in purely lyrical quality. Actors have succeeded in Hamlet who would not have been tolerated in Horatio, and the result has been due to a flood of auxiliaries not their own. None the less is it an actor's business to learn to sustain the weight of subsidiary characterisation, or the poet's art to bear the burden of sweet music. Song writing requires, first, that its words should live in the air (which is properly its heritage) and make the music of sound, not of sight; next, that its affluent speech should be wedded to its golden

thought ; and, last, that variety of cadence should run through it and sustain it. There are eleven songs in Rossetti, and judged by the standards I have indicated they rise in ærial sweetness, richness, variety and truth to the level of the songs in Shakspeare. Listen to the sad swell of "A Little While," the murmur and sinking sadness of whose third and last lines fall on the ear like the roll of a receding tide under the grey light of a low November moon :—

" A little while a little love  
The scattering Autumn hoards for us  
Whose bower is not yet ruinous  
Nor quite unleaved our songless grove.  
Only across the shaken boughs  
We hear the flood-tides seek the sea,  
And deep in both our hearts they rouse  
One wail for thee and me."

"The Song of the Bower" is, amongst Mr. Rossetti's songs, all sensuously exquisite, the most peerless piece of perfection. It is a creature of the air, an unbodied joy. The first four lines have wandered somehow out of the *Tempest*, where they hold their heart's heart's kindred.

" Say, is it day, is it dusk in thy bower,  
Thou whom I long for, who longest for me ?  
Oh ! be it light, be it night, 'tis Love's hour,  
Love's that is fettered as Love's that is free."

Mark the change of tone to the slow, solemn note of the second stanza, and again the change to the full flood and fervid outburst of

" What were my prize, could I enter thy bower,  
This day, to-morrow, at eve or at morn ?  
Large lovely arms and a neck like a tower,  
Bosom then heaving that now lies forlorn.  
Kindled with love-breath, (the sun's kiss is colder !)  
Thy sweetness all near me, so distant to-day ;  
My hand round thy neck and thy hand on my shoulder,  
My mouth to thy mouth as the world melts away."

But no methods of science I can apply can analyse the ultimate elements of Mr. Rossetti's great gift of song. The pungency of sudden phrase, the trick of rhyme, the flashing mastery of hand belong to that realm of the undefinable in art of which criticism can give only a feeble and lifeless suggestion.

Narrative poetry requires lyric finish, added to a flood of incident that has neither break nor pause. Fancy must give place to imagination, and sweetness to force. And where is the sweep of story stronger, music richer, or imagination more

H

piercing than in "The Last Confession," and "Dante at Verona?" The prurient "Giaour" has nothing to match the power and Othello-like passion of the first of these poems, and in vigour of handling the second stands side by side with the "Revolt of Islam."

A song should catch the note of some single and simple emotion : it cannot attempt to follow the growth of any complex feeling. It may represent the double facet of a thought and echo, the undulating swell of a sensation, but its scope and scheme, its meaning and purpose are bounded by these limitations. A narrative poem, on the other hand, may not only follow the progress of incident, but indicate the origin of emotion, observe its rise and trace its development. In this sense "Jenny" is essentially a narrative poem. It tracks the growth of a feeling more real than fact. The movement of incident cannot anywhere be more eager, sustained and absorbing than the change of emotion from the warm picture of the sweet child, radiant with joy, leaping with the love of life, lying in the meadows, looking far through the blown grass and wondering where the city is of which they tell her for a tale, to the cold, dark study of the weak, erring girl who knows the city now, its pride and woe, yet while "nothing tells of winter" steels her heart against its sorrow and shuts her eyes to its shame. But Mr. Rossetti's highest mastery of the narrative form of composition is seen in "The Last Confession." Scott and Byron knew well how to sustain the flood of story, but Scott's great gift of reality inclined him merely to reproduce the material furnished by his eye and memory, without regard for its ethical significance ; and Byron's pruriency of instinct forbade his vivid perception to sound the depths of passion. The grandeur of moral impulse which runs through Mr. Rossetti's story is such as never entered into the mind of either to conceive. The incidents are simple ones. A banished young patriot in Italy's days of trouble finds a child whom famine has caused to be deserted by her parents ; he brings her up as his own, and in the progress of years is startled to discover that his affection for the child develops into love for the woman ; finally he slays his beautiful ward to save her from dishonour. The passion of the poem grows out of the exile's suspicion of the base unworthiness of his dear idol. The slight and secret artifices by which this feeling steals into his soul, the imperceptible advantages which it gains there, the means by which it renders all other feelings subservient to its purposes until (as Lessing, has said in a

similar connection) it becomes sole tyrant of his desires—all this is most powerfully displayed. It is indeed an Othello-like passion Mr. Rossetti has depicted, and has no touch of jealousy.

Ballad poetry requires lyric finish, narrative power and dramatic insight. The dialogue and burden should be fluent and fervent. "Eden Bower" is strong, serious and perfect, but "Sister Helen" is the one great ballad of the century. Its imperial theme cut out of some shapeless chronicle into modern, not mediæval form, is the old, old sad story of beauty and love, betrayal and sorrow, revenge and death. Its weird sorcery makes the blood run cold. Its blacker shades resemble the bolder lines in the "Ancient Mariner," but the human passion in it is stronger. Its marvellous characterisation is beyond admiration. The dying suppliant, his white-haired father, the innocent child made the tongue of relentless revenge, and finally the betrayed sorceress, unforgiving and unforgiven.

" A soul that's lost as mine is lost,  
Little brother !"

*( O Mother, Mary Mother,*

*Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven !)*

It is worthy of mention that while the burden in "Troy Town" and in "Eden Bower" is sometimes heavy and lacking in variety of application, the burden in "Sister Helen" is throughout sustained with matchless point and power. Even the trying ordeal of oral reading will never be found to render it irksome or deficient in significance. The ballad, like the song, should catch the note of some simple emotion, and like the narrative poem it should at once carry with it the flood of incident and trace the growth and development of feeling. Unlike either, however, the ballad is not limited to single characterisation. It has dramatic breadth. "Sister Helen" has a simple theme. A lady deserted by her lover revenges herself by aid of sorcery : she burns his waxen effigy three days over a fire, during which he dies in torment. Around this simple scheme the poet has gathered unequalled lyric, narrative and dramatic excellencies. Every thought is clothed in imperishable speech. The passion of the ballad is not complex but simple, as the passion of a ballad should be, and sad. Like great slow waves rolling in a wintry sea, its billows of feeling rise and fall. The picture is perfect in silver and red and black. The child plays in the balcony without, and within she, herself, Helen, prays the prayer

H 2



that shall yet be heard ; forecasts the short, sweet hour that will soon be passed. Through the eyes of others we can see her, and in our vision of her she is beautiful. But it is the beauty of fair cheeks from which the canker frets the soft tenderness of colour ; the loveliness of golden hair that has lost its radiance ; the sweetness of eyes once dripping with the dew of the spirit, now dry, and cold, and lustreless. In her face we may see the mark of a great wrong, and, as visible, the relentless vengeance that pursues the faithless. That vengeance shall know no ending until the time doth come when the naked soul shall flee from hence more fast than the waxen knave she burns ; and when the Judge of all things shall do right. Fire, then, shall forgive him as she forgives, whose heart for his pleasure fared the same. Her love has turned to hate ; no more ; but few can know the love she bore him, and fewer feel the hate it turned to. How much she loved we cannot know, or know only in the sad picture of her hate ; and to be wroth with one she loved doth work like madness in the brain. But her's is the hate that is born of love, and though it follows its victim to the last and the bitterest, yet is it one with love : the same and indivisible.

" But *he and I* are sadder still  
Little Brother."

The sonnet requires perhaps the highest art outside dramatic poetry. It asks a stronger grasp of theme, a completer moulding of material. Imagination in the sonnet should rise higher than the fixities and realities of memory, and yet keep ideal probability always in sight—be true, namely, to the possibilities of nature if false to its facts. The sonnet should be intense ; its passion focused not diffused. The sonnet that needs to be propped up or explained by what goes before it or comes after is a poem of prescribed dimensions, not a sonnet. The art of Mr. Rossetti's sonnets has perhaps never been surpassed in English literature outside Shakspeare, and a page or two of Wordsworth. Even the heat of spiritual life, and the magic in Shakspeare's sonnets, do not overmatch the warm purple passion of " Supreme Surrender " and the fiery perception of some parts of " Lost Days."

Of all forms of composition the sonnet seems to me the most appropriate for the expression of what is called pre-Raphaelite feeling in poetry. There are two essential principles which govern this fitness. First, the sonnet should ask the utmost finish of execution—a finish involving patient and honest work. Here it is a jealous mistress, and yields its best charms to those

only who follow it with ardour and constancy. Poets, it is true, who have attained excellence in epic and lyric forms of verse, and who have found short and rare solace, merely, in this order and composition, have nevertheless sometimes written sonnets of the highest excellence. Milton wrote eighteen only, many of them defective in artistic finish, and wanting in earnestness of theme, but one of them is the rich sonnet on the slaughtered saints. Keats wrote scarcely more than twenty sonnets, but that thing of pure beauty, beginning "The poetry of earth is never dead," is of the number. The sonnet never moulded itself freely to the hands of the elder Coleridge, but from that magician in lyric art came the grandly-conceived sonnet to the "Autumnal Moon." Shakspeare and Wordsworth wielded a great mastery in this domain of art because they pursued it with more ardour; but Mr. Rossetti seems to me often to surpass both in unity of design, symmetry of outline, pungency of appropriate phrase, and chiefly in that rare gift,—variety of construction. Finish of execution is everywhere characteristic of the art of the pre-Raphaelites, and Mr. Rossetti has put more than half his dexterity of hand into his sonnets.

Again, the sonnet should be solid, not spectral, concrete, not ideal in theme. A poem marred by slovenly manipulation and built upon some vaguely spectral subject, should take any form but that of the sonnet, to which such dishonouring and false treatment is peculiarly hurtful. The noblest English and Italian sonnets are essentially concrete; witness Wordsworth's "Earth has not anything to show more fair," and Michaelangelo's "If Christ was only six hours crucified." Solidity of theme distinguishes pre-Raphaelitism, the chief of whose gifts is a gift of reality, and the foremost of whose virtues is a disposition for looking sternly the sober facts of the world in the face. Mr. Rossetti's sonnets are solid rather than spectral, but of a solidity nearer akin to that of Michaelangelo than to that of Wordsworth. His is the reality of vision, not the solidity of fact. His sonnets embody at once the spirit of the sensuous and the sensuousness of spirit.

I have now only a few pages to add to my brief monograph, and it is on the second of the two aspects of Mr. Rossetti's mind I spoke of. Setting him up against all other art in order to get some idea of his final place amongst artists—what is the school of his genius? Perhaps his genius is too individual to be classed or placed anywhere; perhaps it is the characteristic of genius that it refuses to be disposed of by classification.

Well then, be it so : it is too individual. But the classification has been done already, and I think wrongly. The "æsthetic poets" have claimed Mr. Rossetti for their own ; but is there not a deeper thing in him than the love of beauty for the sheer passion of pursuit? Lovers of "art for art" may claim kindred with Browning's "Caliban," who worked "for work's sole sake ;" but surely a strong sense of *conduct* is the underlying thing in Mr. Rossetti. True, there is in him an utter Greek love of beauty and passion for art, but has the Italian element in him been duly considered? Is there not something Dantesque about him? What is it calls out his love for Dante at Verona?—Dante's love of Beatrice? No, but his *conduct*. There is an Italian element in Mr. Rossetti, and it is Italian before the Renaissance, that is, *Jewish* in essence. The ultimate thing in him is Hebrew. As in Mr. Ruskin, so in Mr. Rossetti, the topmost thing is love of beauty ; the deepest thing is love of stern, uncomely right. The fusion of these softens the poet's old mythological Italian Catholicism and ironises his sensuous passion. Can anyone question this who has read and remembered his "Last Confession," "Sister Helen," "Jenny," and chiefly his "Dante at Verona?"

It would be wrong to say that Mr. Rossetti has part or lot with those false artists, or no artists, who assert without fear or shame that the manner of doing a thing should be abrogated or superseded by the moral purpose of its being done. Through and in his poetry, as in his painting, we may see that to him, *as an artist*, the first thing is to do his work supremely well for its own sake, while the accident is the ethical result which follows. Mr. Rossetti makes no conscious compromise with the puritan principle of doing good, and to demand first of his poetry the lesson or message it has for us, would be wilfully to miss of pleasure while we vainly strove for profit. He is too true an artist to follow art into its byeways of moral significance, and thereby cripple its broader aims. But at the same time all this absorption of the artist in his art lives and works together with the personal instincts of *the man*. It is everywhere mixed with it and coloured by it, and to do good on other grounds is in Mr. Rossetti's art involved and included in being good on its own.

And those who assert that the manner of doing a work is *the essence* of the work done, may claim to be the perfect artists by right of their passion of pursuit. They are assuredly imperfect men. Their work may be of supreme value to certain byeways

of art, but their narrowed aims make as feeble an effort as puritanism ever advanced to cover the whole domain of art. The colour of the picture and the music of the poem belong to the manner of the artist, and appeal first to our affections, but the pleasure, or even exaltation of soul, we derive from them is due not to any virtue in themselves so much as to their own spiritual significance and suggestiveness.

But the manner of doing a thing can never be more than a part of the work done, and art has never been followed for its own sake without involving other meanings, purposes and results. Look broadly at the mediæval ages for evidence of this enforced marriage of manner and meaning ; or look specially, if you will, at the age of the Renaissance. The artist has never at any time divorced his moral nature from his artistic instinct, and cannot. The ethical significance may have been always the accident of his *work*, but it has been always the essence of his nature ; and those artists who, to-day, claim the supreme place for the manner of their work are struggling either to cheapen the gifts they have not got in abundance, or more probably, to conceal the quality of the meaning in their work of which they have no moral cause to be proud.

You may know a tree by its fruit, but the fruits are not the essence of the tree, and even as an artist's moral instincts are so will his art be. His art cannot escape the colouring it gets from the human side of his nature, because it is in the essence of art that it appeals to its own highest faculties largely through the channel of moral instincts: that music is exquisite and colour splendid, first because both have spiritual significance, and next because they respond to sensuous passion. But it is one thing to pursue art for its own sake with an over-ruling moral instinct that gravitates towards conduct, and quite another thing deliberately to absorb art in moral purposes. Cowper and Klopstock furnish well-worn examples of the trespass of unlovely morality upon the truth and beauty of art ; and Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Beaudelaire of the violent abrogation of puritanism in the pursuit of manner. But the poetry of Mr. Rossetti shews how possible it is, without making conscious compromise with the puritan principle of doing good, to be unconsciously making for moral ends. This is because the basis of the poet's nature is a Hebraic craving for the correct, and as the tree is so have the fruits been. There is a passive puritanism in "Jenny" which lives and works together with the artist's purely artistic passion

for doing his work supremely well. Every thought in "Dante Verona" and "The Last Confession" is mixed with and coloured by a personal moral instinct that is safe and right. And now, looking at the relation of art and morality as seen in the light of Mr. Rossetti's poetry, there will be no need for "the poor fine arts to take themselves away" from before the face of aggressive puritanism, if artists will look closely to it that the personal nature which, without purpose of their own, permeates their work is such as will bear fruits of good meaning. After that, art for art, by all means, both first and last, and art will assuredly be good on other grounds as well as good on her own.

We cannot easily bring ourselves to believe that either moral or artistic self-consciousness can inspire true art-work, or even so much as nestle at the root of it. We know that men have consciously wrought great work for the praise and achievement, and for the expression of religious feeling; but we cling to the belief that the noblest and best has been done when the artist has forgotten his purpose and yielded himself up with *abandon* to his mood. The sonnets of Mr. Rossetti's "House of Life" seem to our enchanted sense to have grown up out of sheer joy of their own loveliness. Nevertheless, all art is essentially self-conscious, and between two such opposite aims and forces as operate in the art of Cowper, and in the art of Rossetti we see only certain differences of kind and measure of self-consciousness. The inspiration is dead when the picture is painted and the poem written. It is the key of poet's art to prolong the inspiration or reproduce it by memory. The "mute inglorious Milton," and the Milton of imperishable speech differ only in this: To the one the angel, whose visitations both enjoy, comes like soft music heard in sleep and leaves after it an unsatisfied yearning and sweet sadness; to the other it is an angel to be wrestled with the whole night long, if perchance with the dawn it leave its name and blessing behind it. And the most peerless thing of beauty in Mr. Rossetti's volume is to the inspiration which induced it like his "Portrait" to the lady it represented—

"Less than her shadow on the grass  
Or than her image in the stream."