

a volume of priceless value to the world. Elizabeth Barrett now at the age of 35 appeared to have completed her intellectual growth. It was a chance whether her future should be greater than her past, and so where was her name more honored or lauded than in the United States and many were the Americans who strove to obtain her co-operation in their schemes philanthropic or otherwise. The abolitionists were the most energetic & successful - But now the most momentous event of her life the turning point of her destiny was at hand. Among the few living poets of whom she was wont to speak ^{with admiration} was Robert Browning. She mentioned him in her poem Lady Geraldine's Courtship and there is a pretty myth that,

ship wooed him to her side
he sought her ~~out~~ after that,
However that may be, from that time
forward his name and reputation
found frequent mention in her
Correspondence. How their affection
friendship waxed, how their affection
intensified and how finally they cast
in their lots together is a sweet ^{romance}
the world knows not - and never
can know only so far as they
two chose to tell it. Mr. Browning says
In that darkened room she studied
and wrote and from her sick chamber
went forth the winged inspiration of
her genius, these came into my heart -
and resting there awakened love
for the great unknown. I sought
her out. I wrote her a letter, crisscross
with my desire to see her she reluctantly
consented to an interview, I flew to

her apartments was admitted by
the nurse. And the golden oppor-
tunity was not to be lost, Then &
there in the presence of the
nurse, I poured out my impassioned
soul into hers, though my fate
seemed like an enthusiasts dream
Mr. Browning overcame her objections
but not those of her father. And
lifted the ^{body} rail from her lounge
"to which she was bound as a
picture to its frame" and bore
her off from the fogs of England
to a home under Italian skies
The Nightingale who had long
sung in the dark with her breast
against a thorn now changed
into a Lark, morning had
come, singing for very joy at
heavens gate which had since

opened to let her in, never before
did Hymen unite true minds
And never was man or minstrel
more honored than her "most-
gracious Ringer of high poems"
In the tremor of her love she unda-
valued herself ^{and} There was never
a woman who sang so divinely
of love as she in her Portuguese
Sonnets, What she said so mag-
nificently of Sappho is true of
herself: She broke off a fragment
of her soul to be guessed by
Poets - truly does she image forth
in the first of her love Sonnets
the change in her whole being -
I saw in gradual vision through
my tears
The sweet sad years - the melancholy
years,

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Those of my own life, who by turns
had flung
A shadow across me, straightway
I was ware
So weeping, how a mystic shape
Did move.

Behind me, and drew me back-
ward by the hair,
And a voice I aid in mastery,
While I strove,
Guess now who holds thee? 'Death!
' I said but there,
The silver answer rang 'Not
Death but love!'

The growth of this happiness, the
worship of its bringer, & the doubt
of worthiness are the theme of
these Sonnets which, I think, I
consider if not the finest, portions
of the finest subjective poetry

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in our literature, and thinks it no
sacrilege to say that their music
is shrouded from a higher and
purer atmosphere than that of
the Swan of Avon, ^{Shakespeare} His personal
poems were the overflow of his
impetuous youth, Mrs Brownings
the outpouring of a woman's
tenderest emotions. The Sonnet
artificial in weaker hands in
hers becomes "Swift with feeling
red with a bled humanity -
Fifteen happy ~~years~~ and illustrious
years lay before them - & never
was there a more complete trans-
mutation of the habits and sym-
pathies of life than that which
she experienced beneath the
blue Italian Skies, At first the
influence of her new life was

of a complex nature. Thus It opened
a sealed fountain of love which
broke forth in Celestial Song It
gave her a land and cause to
which she thoroughly devoted
her womans soul, ^{and} much of her
vagueness and gloom departed
with her returning health -
Her technical gain was partly due
to the stronger themes which bore
up her wing and partly I have
no doubt to the companionship
of Robert Browning. Even if he
did not directly revise her works
neither could fail to profit by
the others genius and experience
Mrs. Brownings devotion to
Italy has become a portion of
the history of our time and for
fourteen years her oratory in

Casa Guido was vocal with the as-
piration of that fair land to be
free, its beauty enthralled her,
its poetry spoke through her
voice, its grateful soil finally
received her ashes and will
treasure them for an age to come
It was ^{George} in Casa Guido where the
three happiest years of her woman-
hood had passed - that her own
young Florentine was born her
Blue-eyed prophet, thou to whom
The earliest world day light that
ever flowed

Through Casa Guido windows
chanced to come. They named
him Robert Barrett Browning
after his two parents - And I
will ^{add} ~~say in passing~~ that the
boy grew and prospered and

is a successful man in Art-circles
today.* While experience of mother-
hood had now perfected ~~our~~
poets her woman's nature, Mrs.
Browning was at the zenith of
her lyrical career. Her minor
lyrics are admirable, she revised
her earlier poetry & Mr. Tilton
has pointed out some of her
earlier fastidious and usually
successful imitations. ^{As have many} I would
~~gladly linger~~ ^{charm many} give you glimpses
into this beautiful ^{poet's} home life
at Casa Guidi but I must
content myself with a few
sketches from ^{the} Hawthorne's note
book. After some search we found
the Casa Guidi which is a palace
in a street not far from our own.
Mr Browning was very kind and

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warm in his expression of pleasure
at seeing us. Mrs. Browning met
us at the door of the drawing
room, and greeted us most kindly.
She is very small, delicate, dark
and expressive. She looked like
a spirit. A cloud of hair falls on
each side her face in curls, so as
partly to veil her features, but
out of her veil looks sweet sad
eyes. The smallest possible amount
of substance encloses her soul
and every particle of it is infused
with heart and intellect. I was
never conscious of so little unre-
deemed perishable dust in any
human being. In the upper hall
we found the little boy Browning
so slender, so fragile and spirit-like
that in the dim light he looked

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like a waif of poetry drifted up
into the dark corner with long
curling brown hair and buff
silk tunic embroidered with
white. We went out upon the
Balcony & in an old church
near by a melodious choir
was chanting. The Balcony
was full of blooming flowers
growing in cases. Overhead
the stars - flowers of light bloss-
omed out one by one as eve-
ning deepened. The music
the flowers the Brownings and
the child all combined to
entrance my wits.
And my wits are further en-
tranced by this picture of
the Brownings and Hawthorne
gathered together in that weird
old Florentine palace conveying

as only they could. The beggars who
walked under the Casa Guido win-
dows called her the mother of the
beautiful child, this was pleas-
anter to her ears than to "hear the
nations praising her afar of."
Upon Casa Guido the grateful
Florentines placed to her memory
a white marble slab engraved
in letters of gold. - The most
mature of her works as Mrs.
Browning terms Aurora Leigh
had been germinating for some
years in its author's mind
before it was deemed fit to
face ~~face~~ the fierce glare of
publication. The work seems
to have been done, at odd mo-
ments Mr. Browning says my
wife used to write it and say

it down to hear our child spell
or when a visitor came it was
tucked under a pillow, At Paris
she gave me the first six books to
read & never having seen a line
before, she wrote the rest in
London where I read them also.
I wish in one sense that I had
written and she read them.
Probably no long poem ever met with
so enthusiastic a reception, its
publication invoked a chorus of
praise, which Ingram says has
somewhat modified in tone. Landor
writing of it says, "In many pages
there is the wild imagination of
Shakespeare, I had no idea anyone
in this age was capable of such
poetry, I am half drunk with it.
Never again did I think I should