

bewildering does it appear. A man, ever conscious of the awe-inspiring and blissful experience of an unknown world, wandering about amid the evils of this—what would be his conduct towards himself and others?

In a review of Browning's life and works in *Blackwood's Magazine*, shortly after his death, the writer says:—"Those great poems which have slowly, but surely, conquered their place in the mind of the country—by the fact that, in spite of often involved phraseology and halting rhythm, they have in them in many cases the highest poetic insight that has been known since Shakespeare. He descends into the deep places of the soul with that lamp, and lays bare what he sees there—whether the workings of an evil soul elaborately making itself out to itself (the most subtle, yet the most universal of all processes) to be not all evil; or the heavenly exploration of a noble one of its own natural simple impulses, as in 'Guido Franceschini' and 'Caponsacchi'; or those musings of the great spirit which knows itself to be a failure, most pathetic of all things upon earth, like Andrea—or which perceives this in the failing of all followers and friends, like Suria; or the high innocence and passion, the white light of human feeling at its most exalted and purest, as in 'Pompilia.' To see those beings from without is one thing, and a great and noble art; but to see them from within is another—an art more penetrating still, a revelation which is almost too dazzling, and which the ordinary spectator often blenches at, bewildered by the intensity of the light."

This is placing Browning's genius upon the loftiest pinnacle, and, if the estimate is a true one, we see how natural it was for him to view the soul of the man after such an experience as Lazarus had, sorely tried by the ways of this world. But the action of the soul, though laid bare and delineated by genius of a high order, offers no attraction to the ordinary reader. Browning was emphatically the poet of the soul. Hence, his writings are little studied (they require

study to be understood) except by those who are capable of appreciating great thoughts.

Browning loved to express himself in the dramatic form. It was characteristic of his genius, and he selected it in preference to all others for most of his writings. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that he adopted it, as most appropriate, in the poem which he has entitled: "An Epistle, Containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician."

He imagines that an Arab physician, named Karshish, whilst on his travels, writes frequent letters to Abib, his former master, all sagacious in the medical art of those days, and to whom he is indebted, he says, for such poor skill as he could boast of. Karshish is described as a picker-up of learning's crumbs, and not incurious in God's handiwork. Like his master, he is inquisitive about all that befalls the flesh, and the processes by which (under God) he baffled death. He, the vagrant scholar, has written twenty-one letters previously, with details of his journeys, incidents and accidents of travels, and his observations thereon. He now addresses to the sage at home his twenty-second letter. In that letter he describes the labours he has endured, the dangers he has encountered by the country-side being on fire, by wild beasts, and being waylaid, stripped and beaten by robbers. But in the end he passes over the hill country of Judæa, and reaches Bethany, a sleepy old town, where he has some medical experience, gathers some remedies, and entrusts them all to a Syrian runagate for delivery to Abib.

He is about to close his letter, when a thought strikes him, and he stays his hand. "I half resolved," he continues, "to tell you what set me off a-writing first of all. Yet, I blush to do so. Either the town's barrenness, or something in the man himself, claimed my attention, for his case struck me far more than his worth. He has gone from me just now, whose ailment is the subject of my present discourse. The man—*one Lazarus, a Jew*—is fifty years of age,