

envy of politicians of all faiths. To accept a colonelcy for which he has had no training puts the great proletarian in a false position which can only be justified by a display of military accomplishments as remarkable as those which compelled admiration in the late campaign.

The command of unconvinced and dissenting troops, who have had a better training than their colonel, will be a difficult and unprofitable position for magnetic Mr. Bryan.

As to his reasons for enlisting nobody doubts his patriotism and he is a man of family and of peace. To the charge of cowardice which is always made against those whose vocal gifts arouse other men to action, Mr. Bryan can better afford politically to answer with silence than to engage in an undignified scramble for a place which cannot increase his reputation. Every real soldier feels that military training and achievement should be the basis of a commission rather than political influence or rare oratorical talent.

But such appointments have been the peril of all nations in time of war. It is so in England where "Lord Nincompoops youngest sons" are given commissions in the army in which there is every opportunity to commit mistakes of fatal consequence to the soldiers and of great injury to the country.

In strict justice and expedience the officers of the regular army should take precedence of all others. At great expense the country has educated and prepared them for war and to set them aside for those, who in time of peace have monopolized civil honors, is very bad statesmanship. It is well enough to make a president out of a great general who has led the army of the United States to victory because such victories require inspired judgment which in turn is in constant requisition by a president. But to make a colonel out of a distinguished presidential candidate is running a risk not justified by experience or intelligence. And whatever happens to Colonel Bryan as a soldier will be laid at the president's door. If Colonel Bryan's regiment is sent to a post of danger the president will be trying to get rid of a rival, if the regiment is kept at home to guard the coast, the president may be charged with an unwillingness to allow Colonel Bryan an opportunity to distinguish himself as a warrior. For there is little doubt that military glory added to Colonel Bryan's persuasive manners would sweep away the opposition and his addresses would be received with frenzied yells of adoration.

The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning in two volumes, edited by Frederick G. Kenyon, satisfy an interest in a personality at once reserved and frank. Those who now read her letters to Miss Mitford, Mrs. Jameson, Miss Browning and Mrs. Martin, to Tennyson Ruskin, Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Chorley are a part of that public whom she rigidly excluded from all knowledge of the incidents of her life with a horror of publicity which always characterizes fine souls. Yet she accepted the fact that a post mortem recital of her life and a discussion of her character as well as her poems was a consequence of the literary fame which she had won. Therefore we read the letters with the uncomfortable sense of violation somewhat lessened.

Her marriage to Robert Browning greatly prolonged her life and made it happy by placing that sensitive soul in an atmosphere of sympathy and unselfish love. By removing her to Italy her sensitive lungs were for the first time enabled to breathe an air all

the year around which did not irritate them. Born with an all-feminine nature she loved her father, sisters and brothers with an absorbing tenderness that failed to perceive until Robert Browning's love-making revealed it, that she herself was not a necessity to any of the family. The fact of her secret marriage is well known but the reasons for it have not been understood until the publication of these letters. Mrs. Browning's father was an obstinate cold-blooded man who liked his own way so much that having covenanted with himself that he would not forgive anyone who foiled him, he kept his vow even though the keeping broke the heart of an invalid whose only fault was that she loved her father more than he deserved. Mr. Barrett would not consent that any son or daughter of his should get married. When the time and the bride came his sons were excommunicated if they chose to obey their hearts and disobey their unnatural father. When his daughters were wooed they were forced to run away to be married and thereafter the household was ordered never to mention the names of the matrimonial criminals. Though Elizabeth Barrett wrote constant loving letters to her father he sent them all back again unopened and on her rare visits to London he himself left it in order that he might not see her. He was a paternal Bluebeard and deserved a goblin punishment, which there is no record of his having received. But according to the system of recompenses established here Mrs. Browning married a poet, who took her to a warm dry climate, who loved her and understood a poet's requirements of solitude and sympathy. He did his work and she hers as the genius of each directed unhindered by cares of society, business or the household. Mrs. Browning's letters are fervid expressions of a loving, loyal heart. What in Tennyson's letters must be assumed in order to comprehend, her letters reveal with a clearness and lack of reserve in affection that pertain solely to women. The effect of her marriage upon her character, vision and style is very apparent. The style is more direct and stronger, her character is less morbid, and her vision is broadened immensely. She is interested in politics and humanity and she learns to laugh and about the uses of humour. The last, more than anything else, relieves the strain of life. Robert Browning was just and good as well as a poet and his supersensitive "lyric love" learned some of his sanity and repose.

In the two volumes of letters there is a singular absence of references to dress. Once when she arrived in Paris she wrote to a friend in Florence: "Only pray draw your bonnets more over your faces." That is the only allusion to "what to wear" little, sweet, clever Mrs. Browning makes.

In regard to the obscurity of which both she and Robert are accused she says that she will not do as she has been advised, viz, pick out the stupidest acquaintance she has and write down to her comprehension. She says the way is to write for the brightest and the meaning will gradually percolate through until it is comprehended by the average intelligence. The history of the growth of Robert Browning's popularity shows that the rule is not without justification. In the revelation of the satisfaction which two perfectly mated human beings can get out of a few years association with each other I know of no book like these two volumes. It consoles for the amount of incompatibility evident in the neighborhood, and is a proof that the kingdom of heaven need not begin only after death.

It was a lack of judgment in the

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