

## EMILY DICKINSON.

[Written for THE COURIER.]

Living, she avoided all observation. Dead, her volume of poetry reveals her more than her portrait, or daily converse with her, would have done. During her life-time only a few stray poems were published. Since her death in 1886 her poems and her letters have been published by two of her friends, Mabel Loomis Todd and T. W. Higginson.

Strange that one who could not bear to be looked upon should write poetry so subjective. She would not sit for her photograph. She sketches herself in the following:

"I think just how my shape will rise  
When I shall be forgiven,  
Till hair and eyes and timid head  
Are out of sight in heaven."

Her father was the leading lawyer of Amherst, Mass. He was also the treasurer of Amherst college. Once a year he gave a reception at his house to the professors and students of the college and to the leading people of the town. "On these occasions" Mr. Higginson says, "his daughter Emily emerged from her wonted retirement and did her part as a gracious hostess; nor would anyone have known from her manner, I have been told, that this was not a daily occurrence. The annual occasion once past, she withdrew again into her seclusion, and, except for a very few friends, was as invisible to the world as if she had dwelt in a nunnery." Her conduct is differently reported by Mr. Howells in the *Atlantic Monthly*, who says that "sometimes when the guests were assembled she withdrew and sat by herself in an adjoining room with her face averted." There were years when she did not go outside her father's house, more years when she did not go outside the grounds. So morbidly afraid of revealing herself that at last she would not address her own letters she still intended her poems to be published the dedication shows:

This is my letter to the world,  
That never wrote to me—  
The simple news that Nature told,  
With tender majesty.

Her message is committed  
To hands I cannot see;  
For love of her sweet countrymen,  
Judge tenderly of me!

Once the public is sure genius is not posing but really wishes to conceal itself it never turns its eyes away from the hiding place. Emily Dickinson would not mingle with her neighbors. She may not have known enough about them to guess that she herself was a subject of comment to them. Her queer ways must have been a boon to the dwellers in a monotonous New England town. "They do say that Emily Dickinson has not been out of her front gate for five years." There are great possibilities for the gossips in this opening sentence. She was matinees and federations to Amherst as soon as she got old enough to know what she did not want to do.

Mr. Howells and Mr. Higginson give her high rank among poets. They compare her to Heine and to Blake. In the *Atlantic* Mr. Woodberry says she is unworthy the comparison and that oblivion waits for morbid poetry. It may be so. When the first critic in America says so it is probably true. Come to think of it I am glad of it. I go to oblivion myself and we might meet. Her sympathy with nature was constant and close. Her poetry reminds me of Emerson, of Heine, of Thoreau.

## THE GRASS

The grass so little has to do—  
A sphere of simple green,  
With only butterflies to love,  
And bees to entertain,

And stir all day to pretty tunes  
The breezes fetch along,  
And hold the sunshine in its lap  
And bow to everything;

And thread the dew all night, like pearls,  
And make itself so fine—  
A duchess were too common  
For such a noticing.

And even when it dies, to pass  
In odors so divine,  
As lovely spices gone to sleep,  
Or amulets of pine.  
And then to dwell in sovereign barns,  
And dream the days away—  
The grass so little has to do,  
I wish I were the hay!

—SARAH B. HARRIS.

## BESSIE BROWN, M. D.

'Twas April when she came to town; the birds had come, the bees were swarming, her name, she said, was Doctor Brown; I saw at once that she was charming. She took a cottage painted green, where dewy roses loved to mingle; and on the door, next day, was seen a dainty little shingle. Her hair was like an amber wreath; her hat was darker, to enhance it; the violet eyes that glowed beneath, were brighter than her keenest lancet. The beauties of her glove and gown the sweetest rhyme would fail to utter. Ere she had been a day in town, the town was in a flutter. The gallants viewed her feet and hands, and swore they never saw such wee things; the gossips met in purring bands and tore her piecemeal o'er the tea things; the former drank the doctor's health with clinking cups, the gay carousers; the latter watched her door by stealth, just like so many mousers. But Doctor Bessie went her way unmindful of the spiteful cronies, and drove her buggy every day, behind a dashing pair of ponies. Her flower-like face, so bright she bore, I hope that time might never wilt her; the way she tripped across the floor was better than a philter. Her patients thronged the village street; her snowy slate was always quite full. Some said her bitters tasted sweet, and some pronounced her pills delightful. 'Twas strange—I knew not what it meant—she seemed a nymph from Eldorado: where'er she came, where'er she went, grief lost its gloomy shadow. Like all the rest, I too, grew ill; my aching heart there was no quelling; I trembled at my doctor's bill, and lo! the items still are swelling. The drugs I've drank you'd weep to hear! They've quite enriched the gay concocter, and I'm a ruined man I fear, unless—I wed the doctor.

## MR. DUNROY'S READING.

Monday evening, in the chapel of the University of Nebraska William Reed Dunroy will read from his own writings, poetry and prose. The readings will be interspersed with music. Ex-Congressman W. J. Bryan will make a few introductory remarks. Mr. Dunroy during his residence in Lincoln has impressed people with his earnestness, and his gifts are such as to entitle him to the favorable consideration of those who are interested in a young and struggling writer and his conscientious endeavors. Mr. Dunroy ranks with Carl Smith and other aspiring young Nebraskans who have bravely essayed literature, and there is much in his work that promises success in the field which he has chosen. "Blades from Nebraska Grasses," lately published, contains many graceful poems of nature, some as dainty as his "Violets" recently published in THE COURIER, and others in homely form. Mr. Dunroy will read from this book: as well as from his latest work, much of which was written for THE COURIER.

## THE KISSING BRIDGE.

[Written for THE COURIER.]

Have you ever heard of the kissing bridge?  
It crosses the river of Time you know,  
Down where the violets blossom and glow  
Close by the thicket of Youth's green hedge,  
It is ages old, and each rock and ledge  
Has heard through the silvery water's flow,  
Full many a vow in the long ago,  
And witnessed the giving of love's sweet pledge.  
The fairest that ever was built I wis,  
Over a river since time was begun,  
This bridge which none of us ever miss,  
Whose arches flash gold in the morning sun.  
Alone together two loiter and dream  
Though thousands are traveling o'er the stream.

—ISABEL RICHEY.