ST. JOHN IN THE DESERT: AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES TO BROWNING'S 'A DEATH IN THE DESERT'

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St. John in the Desert: An Introduction and Notes to Browning's 'A Death in the desert' by G. U. Pope

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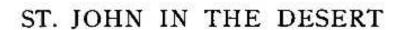
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G. U. POPE

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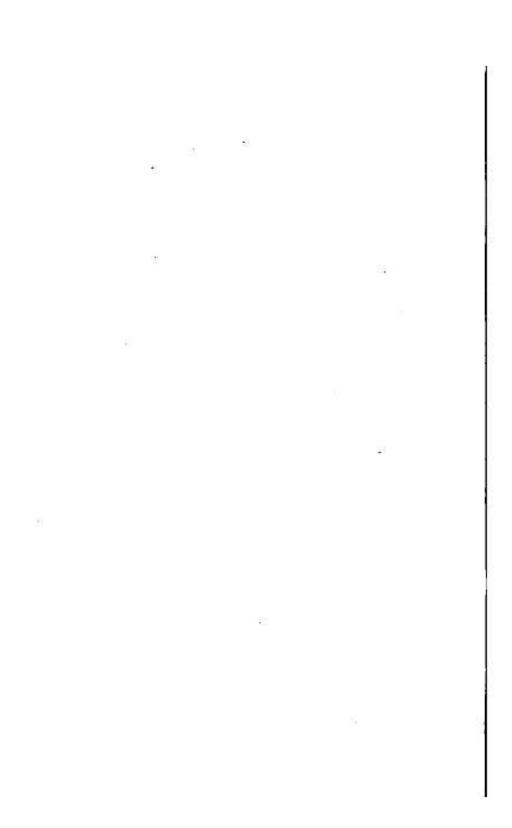
'A DEATH IN THE DESERT'

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London

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1897



PREFACE

THE aim of these pages, written at the request of some former pupils, is to help beginners in the study of a poem full of valuable suggestive teaching—never more needed than now. Some intercourse—too soon interrupted — with the poet seemed to show the present writer that this work (with Saul, Christmas Eve and Easter Day) did really unlock the great master's soul. Mrs. Sutherland Orr, in her Life of Browning, is surely too definite in her conclusions regarding this very delicate subject.

These notes of lectures simply contain answers to questions proposed by learners at one time or another. Some students need more help than others; these pages are for the merest beginners.

I take this opportunity of thanking Mr. R. Barrett-Browning for his permission to reprint this poem.

Several valuable monographs have been written on A Death in the Desert. One by Mrs. M. G. Glazebrook, in Dr. Berdoe's Browning Studies, is especially interesting. There is some divergence in the views taken of the 'mythic' question. Browning, with whom was never any 'doubt or despondency,' at no period swerved (I feel happy in thinking) from the essential faith implied in the close of the *Epistle* of Karshish—the faith of St. John the Divine:

G. U. POPE.

Oxford, June, 1897.

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