

**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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G. U. POPE

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ST. JOHN 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 THE

REV. G. U. POPE, M.A., D.D.

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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 :

The very God!
 So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
 So, through the thunder comes a human voice
 Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
 Face, My hands fashioned, see it in Myself!
 Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of Mine :
 But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
 And thou must love Me Who have died for thee!'

G. U. POPE.

OXFORD, *June*, 1897.

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