

**VICTORIAN POETS: REVISED, AND
EXTENDED, BY A SUPPLEMENTARY
CHAPTER, TO THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF
THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW. IN TWO
VOLUMES, VOL. II, PP. 293-521**

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EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

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PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

BY
EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN
AUTHOR OF "POETS OF AMERICA"

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II.



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VICTORIAN POETS.

CHAPTER IX.

ROBERT BROWNING.

IN a study of Browning, the most original and unequal of living poets, three features obviously present themselves. His dramatic gift, so rare in these times, calls for recognition and analysis; his method — the eccentric quality of his expression — constantly intrudes upon the reader; lastly, the moral of his verse warrants a closer examination than we give to the sentiments of a more conventional poet. My own perception of the spirit which his poetry, despite his assumption of a purely dramatic purpose, has breathed from the outset, is one which I shall endeavor to convey in simple and direct terms.

Various other examples have served to illustrate the phases of a poet's life, but Browning arouses discussion with respect to the elements of poetry as an art. Hitherto I have given some account of an author's career and writings before proffering a critical estimate of the latter. But this man's genius is so peculiar, and he has been so isolated in style and purpose, that I know not how to speak of his works without first seeking a key to their interpretation, and hence must reverse in some measure the order hitherto pursued.

*Robert
Browning:
born in
Cambridge,
near Lon-
don, 1812.*