

**LETTERS OF ELIZABETH BARRETT
BROWNING ADDRESSED TO
RICHARD HENGIST HORNE; WITH
COMMENTS ON CONTEMPORARIES.
VOL. I, PP. 1-271**

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ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING & S. R. TOWNSHEND MAYER

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LETTERS
OF
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

VOL. I.

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LETTERS
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ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

ADDRESSED TO

RICHARD HENGIST HORNE,
AUTHOR OF "ORION," "GREGORY VII.," "COSMO DE' MEDICI," ETC.

With Comments on Contemporaries.

EDITED BY

S. R. TOWNSHEND MAYER.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.

1877.

PREFATORY NOTE.

MANY of the following letters are now published for the first time; the rest have appeared, after varying intervals, in the *Contemporary Review*, *Macmillan's*, and the *St. James's Magazines*, my task as editor being limited to their classification and rearrangement in chronological order for the present volumes. The connecting narrative is of course from the pen of Mr. Horne, who has interpolated no more than was necessary for elucidation—though had he extended his comments it would, I venture to think,

have been ungrudgingly pardoned in an author who is one of the few remaining links between the period of Wordsworth and Shelley, and the risen and rising stars of the present day.

The spiritual strength of Miss Barrett's letters, combined with the modest self-estimate, and temporary forgetfulness of her dangerous state of health, which they evince, renders them unique. The struggle, not only for emancipation from solitude but for life itself, during which they were written, gives them psychological as well as literary value in the key they supply to her mind as expressed in her poems. It is, moreover, a curious fact that the correspondents had never met.

“ Long absence from England, variety
“ of occupation, and bush life in Australia,

“added to motives of delicacy in the fear
“of intruding on unclosed wounds from the
“loss of such a spirit,” says Mr. Horne,
will account for the delay in giving to
the world this mine of literary wealth—
a delay which would have been prolonged
but for the sudden discovery that many
of Miss Barrett’s letters were beginning
to fade. “Her graphic lines,” he con-
tinues, “were in several instances on
“the borders of the vanishing point.”
Under these circumstances he asked
permission of his friend, Mr. Robert
Browning, for their publication, and
this (although Mr. Browning had never
seen the letters) was granted at once, in
terms which enhanced the favour as
much beyond our means to express as
it would be beyond his wish that we
should make the attempt.

I need only add that the "Recollections of Contemporaries," concluding Volume II., are entirely from the pen of Mr. Horne; and that we are greatly indebted to Mr. Richard Gowing for kindly permitting us to reprint—with slight alterations—from the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the two articles on "The Guild of Literature and Art."

S. R. TOWNSHEND MAYER.

RICHMOND, SURREY,
November 21st, 1876.