and father passed on to "where beyond these voices there is peace."

These eleven months, however, though sad and uncongenial enough, were probably months of considerable benefit to Christina; for it was only during that time that she had any lengthened experience of country life, and it is probable that some of her beautiful similes are drawn from recollections of its sights and sounds.

In spite of the influence wielded by the other members of the family, it was her mother who was the great object of Christina's devotion, and to her all her works save two are dedicated. That mother's sweet influence dominated her own religious sentiments, but she knew nothing of intolerance in her outlook upon "other men and other minds"; only seeing, in the various forms of belief, their respective usefulness in bringing into special prominence important points of doctrine which would be unnoticed were all sects merged into one dead level of religiosity. It is to this dear mother that she inscribes her 'Poems,' in words full of graceful and grateful affection, the last of which are as follows:—

"So because you love me, and because
I love you, Mother, I have woven a wreath
Of rhymes wherewith to crown your honoured name.
In you not fourscore years can dim the flame
Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the laws
Of time and change and mortal life and death."

Her last prose work, 'The Face of the Deep,' published in 1892, which is a commentary upon the Apocalypse, in mingled prose and verse, still records that "honoured name" in the touching dedication—

TO
My Mother,
FOR THE FIRST TIME
TO HER
BELOVED, REVERED, CHERISHED MEMORY.

It has been said that, by-and-by, "saints," by virtue of peculiar saintliness, will cease to exist, and that mankind will become uniformly good, Is this a consummation to be wished? Nay, verily — diversities of gifts there must always be, likewise the many and the few "stripes"— else were all that goes to make humanity interesting taken from it, and Progress would cease, and Aspiration become a thing of the past.

Personally both mother and daughter were warmly attached to the Church of England, but the petty bigotry of narrow minds was impossible to them, and her views are firmly expressed in her latest work, where, after deploring schism, she says, "Nevertheless, inasmuch as multiplicity is allied to resource, let us, until better may be, make capital even of our guilty disadvantage. Let us be provoked to good works by those with whom we cannot altogether agree, yet who in many ways set us a pattern. I, at least, can learn much from the

devotion of Catholic Rome, the immutability of Catholic Greece, the philanthropy and piety of Quakerism, the zeal of many a Protestant."

In her early life her mother and brothers united in calling her "really lovely," but it appears to us that in the "fascinating mystery and soft melancholy of her eyes," the irresistible sweetness of her expression, and the bell-like timbre of her exquisite voice— which all the Rossettis inherited from their father— lay the great charm of her indescribable personality. She was the model for several of her brother's best-known pictures, and we are told that Holman Hunt has given "a look of her" to the yearning beauty of Christ as "The Light of the World."

It was in 1862 that Christina Rossetti's first volume of collected poems appeared, and much interest was at once aroused in those best fitted to judge of its merits. "Goblin Market" is a fairy fantasy, into which, however, much meaning can be read by those who care to trace the subtle linking of mysticism with the descriptiveness of apparent realities.

The Hon. Mrs Norton— no mean critic— speaks with special appreciation of "Uphill," and there are probably many to-day who love the poem, with its directness of motive and simple faith in a better country, who do not know even the name of its author. It has found its way everywhere, and

everywhere it is loved. The "young writer" of whom Mrs Norton speaks so appreciatively was then about thirty years of age, but she had known much of the shadowed side of life, and the keynote of her poems is a mystic melancholy, which, however, degenerates but seldom into morbid introspection.

Around her life, her own ill-health and the care of others had thrown an atmosphere of sadness, and, with her hereditary sombreness of temperament, we cannot wonder that only now and again was she able to rise above it into the ether of buoyant hopefulness. We need a certain energy to seize happiness even when it is near, and in her case neither the energy nor the happiness was readily accessible.

The marriage of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to Miss Seddall was no doubt a matter of keen interest to her, but the sudden death of her sister-in-law, after only two years of intensest happiness, was a serious shock to the sister who loved him so tenderly, and to whom his every thought was of interest. His own mental agony was acute, and in his impulsive fashion he gathered together all his manuscripts and placed them, as a last parting gift, upon the breast of his dead wife. Six years later they were exhumed, with his reluctant permission, from her grave in Highgate Cemetery, and he took a belated interest in their publication. But though he has left work behind him that cannot die, it is probable

that he was never again as he had been before that crushing blow fell upon him, and the grief and anxiety which she subsequently endured on his behalf told heavily upon his sister. His artistic triumphs were shared by her, and over and over again in his pictures the sad beauty of her face is reproduced; but as Time's impressions were more deeply made, "as streams their channels deeper wear," she turned ever more to thoughts of Eternity— its mysterious infinity and the plenitude of its consolations.

Time after time she was called upon to suffer for and with others, ministering in turn, with tender devotion, to father, sister, brother, mother, and aunts, and often when her own health was such as to have rendered some rest and respite more than reasonable.

Her description of Birchington churchyard, where Dante Gabriel Rossetti lies buried, has a Tennysonian rhythm about it; but probably few poets owe less than does she to even the most unconscious imitation of style.

"A lonely hill which overlooks a flat,
Half sea, half country-side;
A flat-shored sea of low-voiced creeping tide
Over a chalky weedy mat.

A hill of hillocks, flowery and kept green
Bound crosses raised for hope,
With many-tinted sunsets when the slope
Faces the lingering western sheen.

A lowly hope, a height that is but low,
While Time sets solemnly,
While the tide rises of Eternity
Silent and neither swift nor slow."

Christina Rossetti was essentially religious. She lived in an atmosphere of her own — in the world, though not of it,— but a nature like hers, intense, loving, and faithful, was bound to suffer proportionately when, twice in her life, the gift of love was offered, and her deeply religious convictions led her to refuse its acceptance. We do not know, we cannot tell, how such experiences as these made her suffer, but many of her poems tell their own story, and pre-eminently the Sonnet of Sonnets— "Monna Innominata." There are few English sonnets *so* beautiful as these. They seem so autobiographical as to be almost sacred. We feel while reading them, as probably many have felt while reading the "Browning Love Letters," as if they ought not to be in our possession,— that they are too private for the rude and prying eyes of the public.

And yet, is not all the truest poetry the outcome of personal experience? Could any one but a mourner have written "In Memoriam"? Could any one but a Lord Byron have penned "Don Juan"? It is so with all the Arts — every *chef d'oeuvre,* could we but know it, is written, painted, sculptured, composed, from the innermost fibres of

the poet's, the painter's, the sculptor's, the musician's being. He who has not known sorrow can never appeal to a broken heart; he who realises nothing of the joys of life, its wealth of beauty and its vastness of possibility, can never quicken another soul into enthusiasm, or make our pulses thrill with the knowledge that it is good for us to be here.

If there was an infinite sadness in Christina Rossetti, there was also an infinite faith, and in every little passing incident— so little and so passing that a careless eye would not have observed it at all— she recognised symbols which led her on to high thoughts and fair imaginings.

We have noticed, in our sketch of Jean Ingelow, the paucity of illustrations drawn by her from foreign sources. With Christina Rossetti it is far otherwise. Naturally, the child of the Italian patriot was saturated with the love of her father's land; but she was born in England, within hail of all that was best in English Art and Literature, and it is of England that she loved best to write. She was a confirmed Londoner, knowing, as she says, "as little of what is called Nature as a town sparrow or at most a pigeon, but in the place that best suits me."

As long, however, as Mrs Rossetti was able to enjoy travelling, or to spare her from her side, there were many pleasant visits made, of

which we get glimpses both in her poetry and prose.

Pecuniary difficulties gradually dispersed as the British public slowly acknowledged the varied genius of this remarkable family. In 'The Face of the Deep' she thus speaks of one of her experiences in Normandy in 1861; and as this work was not published until 1892, we incidentally note her retentiveness of memory and the gift which she possessed of linking the things of Time with those of Eternity.

"Once, years ago, in Normandy, after a day of flooding rain, I beheld the clouds roll up and depart and the auspicious sky reappear. Those veils of heaven and earth removed, beauty came to light. What will it be to see the same visible heaven itself remove, and unimaginable beauty brought to light in glory and terror."

Her delight in Italy was instinctive, and some of her verses, written during her one and only visit to "the land of love," glow with the enthusiasm of a home-coming. As, for example, that exquisite sonnet xxi. of "Later Life":—

"A host of things I take on trust: I take
The nightingales on trust,. for few and far
Between those actual summer moments are
When I have heard what melody they make.
So chanced it once at Como on the Lake:
But all things then waxed musical; each star
Sang on its course, each breeze sang on its ear,
All harmonies sang to senses wide awake.

All things in tune, myself not out of tune,
Those nightingales were nightingales indeed:
Yet truly an owl had satisfied my need,
And wrought a rapture underneath that moon
Or simple sparrow chirping from a reed;
For June that night glowed like a doubled June."

That her mother throve abroad was an unaffected joy to her, and had not the feebleness of age "contracted her radius of travel," it is probable that their delightful expedition to the Continent might have been repeated. It was not in her nature to evade duty, and the care of her mother was a sacred thing to which all else was subservient. After Mrs Rossetti's death, in 1866, the charge of her aunts devolved entirely upon Christina, and their growing infirmities told sadly upon a nature that already knew so much of vicarious suffering.

When in their youthful days she and Maria had craved for martyrdom, their brother Dante had laughingly said that they were much nicer as they were, and that the sight of his eccentricities was sufficient martyrdom for their slight shoulders,—but far beyond the brief agony of dying was the daily ministration to aged feebleness and her long witnessing of the mysteries of pain.

"God alone has pity which does not wound," said Madame de Gasparin, and the realisation of this pitifulness was the truest comfort that Christina Rossetti can have felt during the last long years of her life on earth.

In 1872 was published the book for children entitled 'Sing-Song,' and, as contrasted with the sombre tone of her usual writing, it is doubly refreshing and delightful. Throughout the volume there is a breezy freshness that is full of charm for little ones, and yet an undescribable undertone which appeals to their elders, while the numerous illustrations of Mr Arthur Hughes are thoroughly *en rapport* with the melodious rhymes. It is no easy thing to write for children. Little people are stern critics of the books offered for their delectation. They know what they want, and they claim it as a right. They will plunge headlong into a new book, but no sense of consideration for the writer or the giver will induce them to give anything but an unbiassed verdict. Candour is natural to childhood; and the greatest tribute that a book can receive, is for it to be dog-eared and torn with constant fingering. Every day is a little life to them, and that life is too short for any waste of it to be allowable. A book that is to be popular with children must take their fancy at once, or they will have none of it, and 'Sing-Song' is "just lovely" because it does that— and more.

But the "more" comes afterwards.

That Christina Rossetti should have had so little opportunity of developing her love for children adds a pathos to the winning words, which we elders can appreciate; but the book itself will be a