and we can trace here the cheery optimism of her frequent visitor and faithful friend, Robert Browning.

Of all her poems, perhaps the most scholarly is "Honours," which, however, suffers from being unduly spun out. In this poem, geologists are supposed to say that they are "sorry for what they find" in the Book of Nature. From this statement we most emphatically beg to differ, for scientists, more than most men, are always pleased at any new discovery. If religious men, they *find no difficulties,* as was the case with Owen, Lyell, Drummond, and many others; if otherwise, they leave the matter, knowing full well, as Huxley, Tyndall, and Darwin were not ashamed to own, that there is a point beyond which no finite mind can go.

Napoleon the Great was distinctly no saint, yet even he did not hesitate to rebuke his scoffing courtiers on a starlit night, saying as he pointed upwards, "It's all very fine, gentlemen, but *who made all that?*"

The poem ends with this noble poetic peroration:---

"Far better in its place the lowliest bird
Should sing aright to Him the lowliest song,
Than that a seraph strayed should take the word
And sing His glory wrong."

Cardinal Bellarmine meant no disrespect to the Bible when he likened it to "a nose of wax that

can be pulled any way." This statement, made in the heat of controversy, is only another tribute to its grand catholicity. The "Higher Critics" may twist and turn it as much as they like; the Roman Church may evolve Mariolatry and Sacerdotalism; and Evangelical and Nonconformist may respectively deduce Baptismal Regeneration and Predestination from its pages; and yet the old Book lives on, untouched in its majestic vitality. It stands like the Apocalyptic City, "four-square," and its marvellous adaptabilities do but harmonise with the twelve gates of the Holy Jerusalem, through which Papist and Pagan, Anglican and Salvationist, can enter in, and so entering, go not out henceforth, at all, for ever.

It is in no way meant to depreciate her ability when we say that there is a strange irony about the success of some books.

The success for which Jean Ingelow cared so little, and which from a pecuniary point of view was of no account to her, would to many a man be a real godsend. There have been many singers who have *died* singing, for lack of the encouragement which came to her so easily; died sobbing, unrecognised and unknown — "marvellous boys" who have not had even the posthumous fame of a Chatterton.

Of writing for money she knew nothing; the driving-wheel of a stern necessity had no place in

her life. Her message was delivered at leisure, and in ease that almost approached to luxury. There were no anxious watchings for the postman, no dear ones dependent on her daily toil. One of the chief pleasures connected with her books was the friendship which they ensured to her of such men as Sir Arthur Helps, John Ruskin, and Robert Browning. Tennyson also she knew well, and they were proud of each other as being worthy representatives of the Fen country — of the comparatively little-known regions of the sobbing, throbbing river, where the reeds and rushes quiver on the sandy lonesome shore, of

> "The meads where melick groweth,
> Where the water winding down,
> Onward floweth to the town."

Of these most deeply valued friends, only John Ruskin survived her; and he too has now passed over, to find in Heaven's completeness the solution for all the riddles which he strove so hard to read.

For womanhood, as such, she had a great respect, not unmingled with awe, holding that a woman to a woman is either her best friend or her worst foe. She viewed "woman's rights" with dispassionate eyes, knowing and feeling strongly the claim which *all* women have to the highest consideration, but finding in their weaknesses the strongest argument against any possible equality with man. She recognised the fact, which most women are so loth to

acknowledge, that they themselves have forged their own fetters, and that they alone could break the chain which bound them to mediocrity.

Amiable and charitable in character, she yet hated all artificiality; and once in London, when a reciter began to play elocutionary tricks with her "High Tide on the Lincolnshire coast," she quietly, but hurriedly, left the room.

Strictly evangelical, but large-hearted, single-minded, and high-principled, purity and simplicity were among her most distinguishing traits.

Her life in the main was a thoroughly happy one, and she was content to try no experiments upon herself. Her parents had disapproved of the theatre; and though she was spared the pain of losing them until she herself was past middle age, she so maintained the true spirit of loyalty to their memory that she never even tried the effect of one theatrical performance. Such allegiance is rare indeed nowadays; but probably Jean Ingelow was deeply imbued with the doctrines of Ruskin, her greatest teacher-friend, who wrote, "This thing I *know*, and which, if you labour faithfully, you shall know also, that in Reverence is the chief joy and power of life."

Living, she had submitted to them as to the incarnation of God's message to her, and the old ties were but strengthened by reverent remembrance when hey "whom we call dead" had

passed to the Beyond. There was nothing of intolerance in her creed, and though her interests may not have been wide, they were high enough to reach the stars. Music and literature seem to have been her chief enjoyments. Not only was she a great reader, but an admirable performer upon harp, violin, and piano; while, in earlier years, her beautiful voice was a proud delight to all the members of that happy and united family.

Jean Ingelow may have seen, though she never experienced, the misery needlessly and unintentionally caused by the cruel undemonstrativeness of some English households, and we find her saying in one of her books—

"Love me, and *tell me so.*"

We have no clue to the meaning of those few words, but it may be that they were the outcome of some unspoken pain. As far as we know, her life was like that of some nations, happy because of its uneventfulness, and the words may have had no special meaning beyond that which an individual reader may put into them.

But the simple exclamation carries us far away from Jean Ingelow to the lonely old man in the desolate home in Cheyne Row, "broken and solitary, the lamp of my life, which 'covered everything with gold,' as it were gone out— gone out. . . . Blind and deaf that we are! Oh think, if

thou yet love anybody living, wait not till death sweeps down the paltry little dust-clouds and idle dissonances of the moment, and all be at last so mournfully clear and beautiful, when it is *too late*!"

George Eliot reiterates this same thought in 'Adam Bede,' where she says, "When Death, the great Reconciler, has come, it is never our tenderness that we repent of."

An instance of Jean Ingelow's ready kindliness may be given here. A child of our acquaintance, who much admired her poetry, wrote a simple ingenuous letter telling her so, and asking for her autograph. Many a less famous writer would have taken no notice of such a letter; but, though the business of literature just then was specially arduous, and the request doubtless only one of many, she lost no time in replying; and with gracious tact, guessing truly how much it would be valued, she enclosed a signed copy of the following stanza from her "Contrasted Songs." Why she chose these particular lines we cannot surmise, as they are scarcely typical of her usual style, but it may be that they were special favourites of her own.

"Sorrow was a ship, I found,
Wrecked with them that in her are,
On an island richer far
Than the port where they were bound.
Fear was but the awful boom
Of the old great bell of doom,

Tolling, far from earthly air,
For all worlds to go to prayer.
Pain, that to us mortals clings,
But the pushing of our wings
That we have no use for yet,
And the uprooting of our feet
From the soil where they are set,
And the land we reckon sweet."

In writing to young aspirants after literary fame she never discouraged or patronised, but consistently urged them to attend to the structure of language itself, giving, as the best of all reasons, the irrefragable one that if they did not succeed in winning an audience they would at any rate have enriched their own minds.

Her prose writings will never be as well read as her poetry, though some of them ran through several editions: and a collection of short tales, written in her early years under the pseudonym of "Orris," and republished under the title of 'Stories told to a Child,' was illustrated by Millais and other distinguished artists. Her standard of excellence for a child's book was that it should be "simple and straightforward," and to this standard she faithfully adhered. While their construction is simple, the style is delightful; and there is no one, whether young or old, who would not be the better for reading such a book as 'Studies for Stories' or 'Mopsa the Fairy.'

In later life her novels excited much interest,

notably 'Off the Skelligs' and 'Fated to be Free,' which may be bracketed together, as the one is the sequel to the other. Admirable both in design and in execution, the poet's heart throbs through them all. Her descriptions of scenery are veritable prose poems, while wit and humour flash out here and there with a sudden spontaneity which is in itself indicative of genius.

Generous always, she delighted in giving two meals a-week to twelve poor people, who had but just left some one of the London hospitals. Much help and happiness were dispensed by her in this quiet way; and these "copyright dinners," as she jokingly called them, were but samples of her thoughtful and unostentatious kindness.

But the time came when charity had to be done by proxy— when threescore years and ten were passed, and the pen of the ready writer had grown rusty with disuse.

Paralysis laid its withering touch upon her, and for months of weariness and suffering she lay waiting, until the gates should open and the "abundant entrance" be given. Though watched over by a devoted friend and nurse, Time seemed to linger as it passed, and when the last day on earth came it was not unwelcome; for beyond the River of Death lay a better country — that is, a heavenly.

On the 24th of July 1897 they laid all that was

mortal of Jean Ingelow in the cemetery at West Brompton, "in the sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life."

Dr Walsham How, Bishop of Wakefield, read the funeral service; and, over the open grave, the glorious voice of Madame Antoinette Stirling lent fresh meaning and pathos to the words of the King of Poets as she sang the exquisite anthem, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters."

Sunshine and flowers robbed the scene of all but its inherent mournfulness; and among the many floral tributes was conspicuous the beautiful cross of roses sent by John Ruskin,

"IN SORROW AND AFFECTIONATE MEMORY."