

subjects, things of universal familiarity and too often of mere selfish solicitude, in a tone that should link them by all their most graceful affinities to enduring truths of moral and physical beauty—she did not seek to agitate or allure; passed altogether by such terror-giving figures as “busy passion draws in the brains of men;” and seated her readers, above those troubled regions of violence and suffering, in a calm sphere of delicate, womanly, and high-raised sentiment. She was a Wordsworth made easy, playing upon the soothing silver surface of metaphysics, but avoiding its deeper waters—with a flowing and abundant wealth of harmonious words, and a versification of sweetness and facility—always intelligible and always interesting—with a deep religious feeling, sensitive affections, and personal sorrows very touching because always most subdued—she had drawn out of the poetry of that great master thoughts and habits of thinking which attracted to herself no small share of the applause which public taste is even yet not ripe enough to pay to Wordsworth. When it has become so, Mrs. Hemans will no longer be able to claim a separate station or repute in poetical literature. She will have admirers still, because still there will be delicate appetites unequal to the stronger and more simple fare; and still her writings embody pretty stories and pretty sentiments; teach the uses of a tender love of nature, and set forth the beauty of a harmonious disposition of words. We should be sorry to think such claims at any time in danger of utter disregard. If not poetry, they are closely allied to it—if not the rose, they have dwelt beside it. We can in this spirit welcome the publication before us as cordially as the most enthusiastic of Mrs. Hemans’ admirers.

The memoir “by her sister” is written in a high becoming manner. It had been her own desire, it seems, that no formal memoir should ever be written of her life. She knew it presented nothing that the world need trouble itself about, except in the indulgence of a poor and pitiful spirit of curiosity. With a sensitive and true woman’s spirit she shrunk from any intrusion on her domestic scenes or sorrows, and it was one of the injunctions of her death-bed that none of her letters should be published. The step taken by her friend Mr. Chorley, however, some short time after her death, seems in the opinion of her more immediate relatives and connections, to have rendered necessary some such memoir as this before us, in order to set right an “inadequate estimate of her character.” Conceding this, we can only heartily approve the spirit in which it has been done. It is as delicate as it is affectionate and earnest. Nothing is set forward intrusively or impertinently, no undue claims are insisted on, no privacies needlessly invaded, nothing said that the amiable spirit of the deceased could itself have disapproved. It is a gentle and interesting record of many virtues and many accomplishments, of thoughts very gracefully expressed, and much sorrow uncomplainingly endured. A few brief extracts will at once show this sufficiently.

The most painful passage in the private history of Mrs. Hemans is adverted to in these terms—her marriage having been slightly and significantly described as one of an unhappy inequality in habits, manners, tastes, and pursuits.

“In the year 1818, Captain Hemans, whose health had been long impaired by the previous vicissitudes of a military life, determined upon trying the effects of a southern climate; and, with this view, repaired to Rome, which he was afterwards induced to fix upon as his place of residence. It has been alledged, and with perfect truth, that the literary pursuits of Mrs. Hemans, and the education of her children, made it more eligible for her to remain under the maternal roof, than to accompany her husband to Italy. It is however, unfortunately but too well known, that such were not the only reasons which led to this divided course. To dwell on this subject would be unnecessarily painful, yet it must be stated, that nothing like a permanent separation was contemplated at the time, nor did it ever amount to more than a tacit conventional arrangement, which offered no obstacle to the frequent interchange of correspondence, nor to a constant reference to their father in all things relating to the disposal of her boys. But years rolled on—seventeen years of absence, and consequently alienation—and from this time to the hour of her death, Mrs. Hemans and her husband never met again.”

Our next extract—detailing the failure of a tragedy on the subject of the Sicilian vespers—will exhibit one of the lesser miseries of Mrs. Hemans’ public career. We shall only remark upon it that this grief was borne with great spirit, with a cheerfulness of resignation worthy of all praise.

“The piece was produced at Covent Garden on the night of December 12, 1823, the principal characters being taken by Mr. Young, Mr. C. Kemble, Mr. Yates, Mrs. Bartley, and Miss F. H. Kelly. Two days had to elapse before the news of its reception could reach St. Asaph. Not only Mrs. Hemans’s own family, but all her more immediate friends and neighbours were wrought up to a pitch of intense expectation. Various newspapers were ordered expressly for the occasion; and the post-office was besieged at twelve o’clock at night, by some of the more zealous of her friends, eager to be the first heralds of the triumph so undoubtingly anticipated. The boys had worked themselves up into an uncontrollable state of excitement, and were all lying awake ‘to hear about mamma’s play;’ and perhaps her bitterest moment of mortification was when she went up to their bedsides,

which she nerved herself to do almost immediately, to announce that all their bright visions were dashed to the ground, and that the performance had ended in all but a failure. The reports in the newspapers were strangely contradictory, and, in some instances, exceedingly illiberal; but all which were written in any thing like an unbiassed tone, concurred entirely with the private accounts, not merely of partial friends, but of perfectly unprejudiced observers, in attributing this most unexpected result to the inefficiency of the actress who personated *Constance*, and who absolutely seemed to be under the influence of some infatuating spell, calling down hisses, and even laughter, on scenes the most pathetic and affecting. It was admitted, that at the fall of the curtain, applause decidedly predominated: still the marks of disapprobation were too strong to be disregarded by the managers, who immediately decided upon withdrawing the piece, till another actress should have fitted herself to undertake the part of *Constance*, when they fully resolved to reproduce it.”

The closing scenes of Mrs. Hemans’ life are touchingly given—as a sister only could have felt them.

“She would converse with much of her own kindly cheerfulness, sending affectionate messages to her various friends, and recalling old remembrances with vivid and endearing minuteness. Her thoughts reverted frequently to the days of childhood—to the old house by the sea-shore—the mountain rambles—the haunts and the books which had formed the delight of her girlish years. One evening, whilst her sister was sitting by her bed-side, a yellow gleam from the setting sun, which streamed through the half-closed shutters, produced a peculiar effect upon the wall, exactly similar to what used to be observed at sun-set in their old school-room at Gwrych. They both remarked the circumstance, and what a gush of recollections was thus called forth! The association was like that so often produced by a peculiar scent, or a remembered strain of music. Yet in all, save that streak of light, how different were the two scenes!—The one, a chamber of sickness in a busy city—its windows—(for a back-room had been chosen, for the sake of quietness,) looking down into a dull court; the other, a cheerful apartment in an old country house, everything about it bespeaking the presence of happy childhood, and the wide, pleasant window opening out upon fresh green fields; beyond them the silver sea; and far in the west, the sun sinking behind the dark, bold promontary of the Orme’s Head. And in the inmates of those two rooms, the contrast was no less striking. Of the two joyous children, one, ‘the favourite and the flower,’ now a worn and faded form, lay on her dying bed; the other, ‘on the eve of partings worse than death, destined to feel the sad force of the affecting old epitaph:—

‘Why doe I live, in life a thralle,
Of joy and alle berefte?
Their wings were growne, to heaven they’re flowne—
‘Cause I had none, I’m lefte.’”

The passage which follows may serve, while it illustrates the gentle virtues of her heart, to exhibit also the character of her mind, and the source of the inspiration of her verses, as we have already endeavoured to describe them.

“The powers of memory for which Mrs. Hemans had always been so remarkable, shone forth with increased brightness whilst her outward frame was so visibly decaying. She would lie for hours without speaking or moving, repeating to herself whole chapters of the Bible, and page after page of Milton and Wordsworth. The volume of *Yarrow Revisited*, which was published at this time, and sent to her by her revered friend, with an autograph inscription, afforded her great delight. Amongst the many messages of cordial remembrance which she sent to her personal friends, as well as to some of those with whose minds alone she had held communion, was one to Miss Mitford, desiring she might be told how often some of her sweet woodland scenes rose up before her, as in a camera obscura, filling the dark room with pleasant rural sights; with the scent of the new-mown hay or the fresh fern, and the soothing sound of waters. Her ‘Remembrances of Nature,’ described with so deep a feeling in one of her sonnets, continued equally intense and affectionate to the last. A passage from a work which had long been high in her favour, was now brought home to her thoughts with a truth equal to its eloquence. ‘O unseen Spirit of Creation! that watchest over all things—the desert and the rock, no less than the fresh water, bounding on like a hunter on his path, when his heart is in his step—or the valley girded by the glad woods, and living with the yellow corn—to me, thus sad and baffled, thou hast ministered as to the happiest of thy children!—thou hast whispered tidings of unutterable comfort to a heart which the world sated while it deceived. Thou gavest me a music, sweeter than that of palaces, in the mountain wind—thou badest the flowers and the common grass smile up to me as children to the face of their father.’”

We close with the lines she dictated on her death-bed, and which seem to us to have in them the entire sustaining and pervading spirit of her mind and heart. In feeling and construction they may indeed express the whole history of both.

“After the exhausting vicissitudes of days when it seemed that the night of death was indeed at hand—of nights when it was

thought that she could never see the light of morning; wonderful even to those who had witnessed, throughout her illness, the clearness and brightness of the never-dying principle, amidst the desolation and decay of its earthly companion, was the concentrated power and facility with which, on Sunday, the 26th of April, she dictated to her brother the ‘Sabbath Sonnet,’ the last strain of the ‘sweet singer,’ whose harp was henceforth to be hung upon the willows.

‘How many blessed groups this hour are bending
Through England’s primrose meadow-paths, their way
Toward spire and tower, ‘midst shadowy elms ascending,
Whence the sweet chimes proclaim the hallow’d day!
The halls, from old heroic ages grey,
Pour their fair children forth; and hamlets low,
With whose thick orchard blooms the soft winds play,
Send out their inmates in a happy flow,
Like a freed vernal stream; I may not tread
With them those pathways—to the feverish bed
Of sickness bound; yet, O my God! I bless
Thy mercy, that with Sabbath peace hath fill’d
My chasten’d heart, and all its throbbings still’d
To one deep calm of lowliest thankfulness.’”

These were the last. Mrs. Hemans died at the early age of forty-one, on Saturday the 16th of May 1835. She was most regretted by those who had known her best, and her memory is still as much cherished by her more intimate friends, as by her deeply attached relatives. To one of the latter this memoir is thus dedicated: “To Colonel Sir Henry Browne, these pages, written under his roof, which has always been a refuge for the sorrowful, are dedicated by his surviving sister, in remembrance of her, who, during many years of trial, found her best earthly solace in his care and affection.”

EXTRACTS.

From A Pamphlet, dedicated to the Noblemen, Gentlemen, and Sportsmen of England, Ireland, and Scotland, by the Hon. Granley Fitzhardinge Berkeley, M. P., in Reply to a Prize Essay by the Rev. John Styles, D. D., on the Claims of the Animal Creation to the Humanity of Man.

HOUNDS, FORCE OF EXAMPLE.

The charge of cruelty in the training of hounds is thus met and disposed of:

So far from the whip being indiscriminately used in well regulated kennels, the wanton or severe stripes of it are forbidden on pain of instant dismissal to the offender.

Hounds will neither feed nor hunt if flogged at the moment they are called upon to do either one or the other. You may force a dog to crouch at your foot—you may compel him to dance on his hinder legs, or to sit up and beg, or teach him any servile or slave-like trick, but you can no more induce him, by brutal treatment, to put forth the more noble and mysterious powers of his gifted nature, than you can force him to eat the food from the trough. Were such a system of flagellation to be attempted, where one fault would be whipped out of a hound twenty would be flogged in, and the man who turns his mind to the amusement and success of his field sports is a fool, if he takes any other guide in his arrangements than that of nature. The dog may beg from fear—but the hound works alone for pleasure, and if entered by a good huntsman should be full of confidence, exultation, and delight,—and regard the men assisting in the sport rather as merry allies than as creatures tyrannising over him. There is no animal subject to the dominion of man, that takes its character from its master so much as the hound does from the huntsman. The whip will neither make him steady from hare—stead in his demeanour when approaching woods, where his powers are about to be called into activity,—or careful when at fault on a line of scent; it will not induce him to open on the truth, or seal his tongue from the proclamation of a lie. Example—manner—kindness, and attention to the development of the most generous portions of his nature, are the things most likely to make an useful hound, and the man who neglects any one of these inducements, and who resorts to any species of oppression or cruelty cannot be held up as a criterion by which to judge of the generality of sportsmen, or even bear their manly appellation.

ERRORS AND FAULTS, ETC.

When, out of the number of puppies brought into the kennel, the huntsman has selected those he intends to enter for his own use, the rest over and above the number should be drafted into other kennels, and the manners of the young hounds retained, mildly attended to. They should be exercised in couples, first with old hounds, who, knowing their duty, would lead them where to go, and as they became more handy and obedient, the young hounds should then be coupled together; then, as their sedateness and knowledge increased, while at exercise, they should be loosed one by one, according to their docile proficiency. If fox-hounds, they should never be flogged for being inclined to hunt hare, because as it is their nature, and having indulged in it at their walks, they do not know that it is a fault, and a fault should never be reprehended till the hound himself is aware of