

For the Pearl.

ON POETRY.

" Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets."—WORDSWORTH.

The prejudice existing among a certain class in society to Poetry and works of imagination generally, arises evidently from an improper perception of their real properties and effects. Strongly imbuing the principles of utilitarianism, they view the most sterling poetry as frivolous and demoralizing, and would fain deprive us of those feelings and affections which sweeten the cup of existence, by converting us into a race of gloomy ascetics. In opposition to the opinions of this class of individuals, I contend that Poetry is practically useful; that it elevates, softens, and harmonizes our affections, and diffuses a charm round the domestic and social circle.

Every man, until his spirit has become corrupted with the selfish cares, and busy strife of the world, possesses within him the germs of poetry, though he be unable, like the poet, to give "a local habitation and a name," to the beautiful perceptions of his mind, flowing from the contemplation of any lovely object in Nature. The boundless ocean—the magnificent arch of heaven—the stars which glitter in the firmament—possess the same potent influence over the mind of the common observer, as over that of the gifted bard; but the feeling with the one is pent within his bosom—with the other it gushes forth in strains of glowing beauty. It is evident, then, that with this innate love of the beauties of Creation existing within our breasts, anything that fosters this feeling—that adds so largely to the amount of human happiness—should be cherished as a boon of the highest value. With the power of the enchanter's wand, the poet brings forth beauty and freshness, hidden to the common eye, from leaf, and flower, and gentle rivulet:—we pluck the simple daisy, and with Burns derive from it a homily both delightful and instructive; we wander amid the lofty glaciers with Byron, and commune with Nature in her wildest and sublimest aspects; we view the ever-changing seasons with Thomson, and the cheerful scenes of rural life form a sweet picture of repose and contentment; or we stroll abroad on a summer evening in the calm moonlight, and while our spirits drink in the exquisite beauty of the scene, we are constrained to exclaim with Shakspeare—

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps on yonder bank!"

But it is not only amid the works of Creation that the effects of the poet's power are sensibly felt. In the domestic circle, how often does the tear of sensibility flow on the perusal of the eloquent records of man's inhumanity to man!—the struggles of poverty and virtue with the bitter trials of the world—or the blighted hopes and crushed affections of some young and confiding heart. The tender charities of life; all that is lovely and excellent in our nature; and all that have power to attach us still more closely to our common humanity, are delicately shadowed forth in the pages of the poet, who from the hidden fountains of the heart calls forth affections—

"To cheer—to charm—to bless—
And sanctify our pilgrimage on earth."

On the charge against Poetry, of perversion to evil purposes, Southey remarks:—"Poetry may be, and too often has been, wickedly perverted to evil purposes,—what indeed is there that may not, when Religion itself is not safe from such abuses! But the good which it does, inestimably exceeds the evil. It is no trifling good to provide means of innocent and intellectual enjoyment for so many thousands, in a state like ours; an enjoyment, heightened, as in every instance it is within some little circle, by personal considerations, raising it to a degree which may be called happiness. It is no trifling good to win the ear of children with verses which foster in them the seeds of humanity, and tenderness, and piety, awaken their fancy, and exercise, pleasurably and wholesomely, their imaginative and meditative powers. It is no trifling benefit to provide a ready mirror for the young, in which they may see their own best feelings reflected, and wherein 'whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,' are presented to them in the most attractive form. It is no trifling benefit to send abroad strains which may assist in preparing the heart for its trials, and in supporting it under them. But there is a greater good than this,—a further benefit. Although it is in verse that the most consummate skill in composition is to be looked for, and all the artifice of language displayed, yet it is in verse only that we throw off the yoke of the world, and are, as it were, privileged to utter our deepest and holiest feelings. Poetry in this respect may be called the salt of the earth; we express in it, and receive in it sentiments, for which, were it not for this permitted medium, the usages of the world would neither allow utterance nor acceptance. And who can tell, in our heart-chilling and heart-hardening society, how much more debased, how much worse we should have been, in all moral and intellectual respects, had it not been for the unnoticed and unsuspected influence of this preservative?"

This testimonial to the utility of Poetry from one of the most gifted of her sons, will go far to combat the cynical notions that have gained some credit with a few; and furnish strong evidence, that by depriving us of this elegant portion of literature, one great

charm of our existence would be destroyed, to be succeeded by a cold and heartless monotony.

But we have still a higher authority for the use of Poetry. In the sacred writings we meet with poetry of the highest order of sublimity and pathos; but as poetical passages from these writings have so often been quoted, it would be needless to present them here. I cannot refrain, however, from referring to Dr. John Mason Good on this subject:—"The purest and sublimest religion is capable of giving rise to the purest and sublimest poetry. The Bible, indeed, which is the first book we should prize, and the last we should part with, is as much superior to all other books, whether of ancient or modern times, in its figurative and attractive dress, as it is in its weighty and oracular doctrines; in the hopes it enkindles and the fears it arrays. In its exterior as in its interior, in its little as in its great, it displays alike its divine original."

With evidences such as these of the value of Poetry, I will not readily yield the pleasure derived from its perusal, though the cynic sneer at it as frivolous and unprofitable; and I hope Mr. Editor, that some abler pen will take up this subject, so agreeable and interesting to the reader, and give it that full exposition which its importance demands.

A LOVER OF LITERATURE.

ON GOOD SENSE AND BEAUTY IN THE FEMALE SEX.

Notwithstanding the lessons of moralists, and the declamations of philosophers, it cannot be denied that all mankind have a natural love, and even respect for external beauty. In vain do they respect it as a thing of no value in itself, as a frail and perishable flower; in vain do they exhaust all the depths of argument, all the stores of fancy, to prove the worthlessness of this amiable gift of nature. However persuasive their reasonings may appear, and however we may for a time, fancy ourselves convinced by them, we have in our breasts a certain instinct, which never fails to tell us, that it is not satisfactory; and though we may not be able to prove that they are wrong, we feel a conviction that it is impossible they should be right.

They are certainly right in blaming those who are rendered vain by the possession of beauty, since vanity is at all times a fault; but there is great difference between being vain of a thing, and being happy that we have it; and that beauty, however little merit a woman can claim to herself for it, is really a quality which she may reasonably rejoice to possess, demands, I think, no very laboured proof. Every one naturally wishes to please. Important it is that the first impression we produce should be favorable. Now this first impression is commonly produced through the medium of the eye; and this is frequently so powerful as to resist for a long time the opposing evidence of subsequent observation. Let a man of even the soundest judgment be presented to two women, equally strangers to him, but the one extremely handsome, the other without any remarkable advantages of person, and he will without deliberation, attach himself first to the former. All men seem in this to be actuated by the same principles as Socrates, who used to say, that when he saw a beautiful person, he always expected to see it animated by a beautiful soul. The ladies, however, often fall into the fatal error of imagining that a fine person is in our eyes, superior to every other accomplishment; and those who are so happy as to be endowed with it, rely with vain confidence on its irresistible power, to retain hearts as well as to subdue them. Hence the lavish care bestowed on the improvement of exterior and perishable charms, and the neglect of solid and durable excellence; hence the long list of arts that administer to vanity and folly, the countless train of glittering accomplishments, and the scanty catalogue of truly valuable acquisitions, which compose, for the most part, the modern system of fashionable female education. Yet so far is beauty from being in our eyes an excuse for the want of a cultivated mind, that the women who are blessed with it, have, in reality, a much harder task to perform than those of their sex who are not so distinguished. Even our self-love here takes part against them; we feel ashamed of having suffered ourselves to be caught like children, by mere outside, and perhaps even fall into the contrary extreme. Could "the statue that enchants the world"—the Venus de Medicis, at the prayer of some new Pygmalion, become suddenly animated, how disappointed would he be if she were not endowed with a soul, answerable to the inimitable perfection of the heavenly form? Thus it is with a fine woman, whose only accomplishment is external excellence. She may dazzle for a time; but when a man has once thought, "what a pity that such a masterpiece should be but a walking statue," her empire is at an end. On the other hand, when a woman, the plainness of whose features prevented our noticing her at first, is found, upon nearer acquaintance, to be possessed of the more solid and valuable perfections of the mind, the pleasure we feel in being so agreeably undeceived, makes her appear to still greater advantage; and as the mind of man, when left to itself, is naturally an enemy to all injustice, we, even unknown to ourselves, strive to repair the wrong we have involuntarily done her, by a double portion of attention and regard.

If these observations be founded in truth, it will appear that, though a woman with a cultivated mind may justly hope to please,

without even any superior advantages of person, the loveliest creature that ever came from the hand of her Creator can hope only for a transitory empire, unless she unite with her beauty the more durable charm of intellectual excellence.

The favoured child of nature, who combines in herself these united perfections, may be justly considered as the masterpiece of the creation, as the most perfect image of the Divinity here below. Man, the proud lord of the creation, bows willingly his haughty neck beneath her gentle rule. Exalted, tender, beneficent is the love which she inspires. Even time himself shall respect the all-powerful magic of her beauty. Her charms may fade, but they shall never wither; and memory still, in the evening of life, hanging with fond affection over the blighted rose, shall view through the veil of lapsed years, the tender bud, the dawning promise, whose beauties once blushed before the beams of the morning sun.

The man who writes the history of woman's love, will find himself employed in drawing out a tangled skein. It is a history of secret emotions and vivid contrasts which may well go nigh to baffle his penetration and to puzzle his philosophy. There is in it a surface of timid, gentle bashfulness, concealing an underflow of strong and heavy passions, a seeming caprice that a breath may shake, or a word alarm, yet all the while, an earnest devotion of soul, which in its exalted action holds all danger cheap that crosses the path of its career. The sportive, changeable, and cowardly nature that dallies with affection as a jest, and wins admiration by its affrighted coyness; that flies and would be followed, that revolts and would be soothed, entreated and on bended knee implored, before it is won; that same nature will undergo the ordeal of the burning ploughshare, take all the extremes of misery and distress, brave the fury of the elements and the wrath of man, and in every peril be a patient comforter, when the cause that moves is the vindication of her love. Affection is to her what glory is to a man, an impulse that inspires the most adventurous heroism.—*J. P. Kennedy.*

ORIGIN OF INVENTION.—Electricity was discovered by a person observing that a piece of rubbed glass, or some similar substance, attracted small bits of paper, etc. Galvanism, again, owes its origin to Madam Galvani's noticing the contraction of the muscle of a skinned frog, which was accidentally touched by a person at the moment of the professor, her husband, taking an electric spark from the machine. He followed up the hint by the experiments. Pendulum clocks were invented from Galileo's observing the lamp in a church swinging to and fro. The telescope we owe to some children of a spectacles-maker putting before each other, looking through them at distant objects. The barometer originated in the circumstances of a pump which had been fixed higher than usual above the surface of a well, being found not to draw water. A sagacious observer hence deduced the pressure of atmosphere and ried and quicksilver. The Argand lamp was invented by one of the brothers of that name, having remarked that a tube held by chance over a candle caused it to burn with a bright flame—an effect before unattainable—though earnestly sought after. Without Argand lamps, light-houses (to pass over minor objects) could not be made efficient, and on the importance of these it is needless to dwell.—*Penny Mag.*

HINDOO ABSURDITY.—The Hindoos carry on a complete system of bargaining with their gods, or rather a compound system of flattering, cajoling, bargaining and threatening. The most ordinary method is the contracting. "If you will grant me so and so, I will give you so and so, such and such sweetmeats, fruits, flowers, etc.; or, I will worship you alone for so many days." If this is not successful, they say: "If you will not give me so and so, I will keep you without a drop of water; or, I will put a rope round your neck, and drag you round the house; or, the most disgraceful of all, I will beat you with a slipper." In times of drought, or of any great extremity, they will absolutely brick up the entrance to an image, and threaten to keep their god close prisoner, until he shall help them. This took place at Mausuck a few years ago, when the poor god was bricked up, and kept without water, offerings, or adoration, until the rain began to fall, when they liberated their prisoner, and begged his pardon.

By the laws of Austria, no person can be executed for any crime, not even for the most clearly proved murder, without his confessing his guilt. If he refuses to do so when the proof is strong to demonstration against him, he may be imprisoned, but he cannot be sent to his eternal account with a crime unconfessed upon his soul.

Children and people are to be judged of when they are in that state for which nature or instruction has designed them. A weaver would make a poor blacksmith; a carpenter would make a poor tailor; and yet each of them, kept in his place, may do his work well; and no one is to be blamed for the want of what he never had an opportunity of acquiring.