

## SELF-DEPENDENCE.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Weary of myself, and sick of asking  
What I am and what I ought to be,  
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me  
Forward, forward, o'er the star-lit sea.

And a look of passionate desire  
O'er the sea and to the stars I send :  
"Ye who from my childhood up have calmed—  
Calm me, ah ! compose me to the end !"

"Ah ! once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,  
On my heart your mighty charm renew ;  
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,  
Feel my soul becoming vast like you !"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,  
O'er the lit sea's unquiet way,  
In the rustling night-air came the answer.  
"Wouldst thou be as these are ? Live as they."

"Unafrighted by the silence round them,  
Undistracted by the sights they see,  
These demand not that the things without them  
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy."

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,  
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll ;  
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting  
All the fever of some differing soul."

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful  
In what state God's other works may be,  
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,  
These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice ! long since, severely clear,  
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear ;  
"Resolve to be thyself ; and know that he  
Who finds himself, loses his misery."

## MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES FOR THE YOUNG.

BY MRS. ELMINA D. SLENKER.

*Proserpine, No. 8.*

In Sicily's over-blooming shade,  
When playful Proserpine from Ceres strayed,  
Led with unwary steps her virgin trains,  
O'er Etna's steep and Enna's golden plains ;  
Plucked with fair hand the silver-blossomed bower  
And purple mead—herself a fairer flower ;  
Sudden, unseen amid the twilight shade,  
Rushed gloomy Dis, and seized the trembling maid.  
Her startled damsels sprung from mossy seats,  
Dropped from their gauzy laps their gathered sweets,  
Clung round the struggling nymph, with piercing cries  
Pursued the chariot and invoked the skies,  
Pleased as he grasps her in his iron arms,  
Frights with soft sighs, with tender accents charms.  
The wheels descending rolled in smoky rings ;  
Infernal Cupids flapped their demon wings ;  
Earth with deep yawn received the fair, amazed,  
And far in night celestial beauty blazed.

Proserpine was the daughter of Jupiter and Ceres. The favourite residence of Ceres was Sicily, and there she brought up her tenderly beloved daughter, who wandered over the Valley of Enna with her young companions. In Attica she was worshipped under the name of Coro (the daughter), and she and her mother, Ceres, were called "the mother and the daughter." Homer describes her as the wife of Pluto, and "the formidable, venerable, and majestic Queen of the Shades." One day when Proserpine was enjoying her favourite pastime plucking roses, violets, crocuses, and hyacinths, she beheld a Narcissus of great size and beauty, having 100 flowers growing from a single root, she was just plucking the flower when suddenly the Earth opened and Pluto (Dis) arose in his golden chariot, drawn by two horses black as

ebony, and seized the maid and carried her off shrieking for aid ; but all in vain were her cries—she was unheard and unseen by all save Hecate, the daughter of Persous, who sat in her cave, and King Helios (the Sun), whose eye nothing on Earth escapes. At length her mother heard, and, frantic with grief, sought for news of her ; but none could give her the intelligence she asked for. She lighted two torches at Etna, and for nine days and nights she wandered over the Earth seeking her child by their flaming light. On the tenth Hecate met her, and together they went to Helios, and the sun-god told Ceres that Pluto had taken her to his Queen by permission of her father Jupiter. At this Ceres was so offended at Jupiter that she took the society of the gods and came down among men, and lived under the guise of an old woman, and was employed as nurse by the wife of Celeus, monarch of Eleusis, for their son Demophoon. Under her care the child "throve like a god." He ate no food, but Ceres "breathed upon him as he lay upon her bosom and anointed him with ambrosia, and every night hid him beneath the fire," intending to make him immortal. Metenira, the mother, watched one night and saw what the nurse was doing, and screamed in horror, when she dropped the child and told the mother what she had lost, but that the child would still be an honored man. She then told who she was, and directed the people of Eleusis to raise an altar and temple to her without the city, on Callichorus Hill, which was done, and there she took up her abode, but she allowed the Earth to yield no produce. Jupiter, pitying mankind, sent Iris to Eleusis to invite Ceres back to Olympus, but she refused to go. All the other gods were sent also, but in vain, and finding she would not allow the Earth to bring forth till she had seen her daughter, Jupiter sent Mercury to Pluto to coax him to let Proserpine return to the light. He gave consent—the goddess sprung up with joy, and heedlessly swallowed some grains of Pomegranate which Pluto presented her. Then Mercury conducted her to Eleusis and to her mother. When the joy of meeting was a little over, Ceres anxiously asked her if she had tasted anything while below—if not, she was free to spend her whole time with her father and mother, but if she had she would be compelled to pass one-third of the year with her husband. Proserpine confessed she had tasted the grains of Pomegranate, and then told the whole story of her abduction to her mother. Jupiter sent Rhea to invite them back to Heaven. Ceres now complied, and once more fertility prevailed over all the Earth.

Proserpina is supposed to signify seed-corn, which is cast into the ground and concealed for one-third of a year (from the sowing till the ear is produced). In works of art Ceres is represented in full attire, around her head is a garland or wreath of corn ears, and in her hand is a sceptre and sometimes a torch, while she holds a mystic basket of grain. Pigs are sacrificed to her. The property of traitors was often made over to her temple, and the decrees of the senate were deposited therein.

"On Ceres's sacred floor, the swain  
Spreads the wide fan to clear the golden grain,  
And the light chaff before the breezes borne,  
Ascends in clouds from off the heapy corn,  
The gray dust, rising with collected winds,  
Drives o'er the barn, and whitens all the hinds."—HOMER.

## FREETHOUGHT AND WOMEN.

The question of Freethought and its cultivation amongst the women of our day seems to be just now kept somewhat out of sight amongst the prominent Freethinkers, but why it should be so is not always apparent. There is a strong feeling, (perhaps unconsciously), in the minds of many men, who, themselves, ignore the necessity of divine rules for human guidance in matters moral, that women, from their greater liability to act on impulse, require some restriction, outside those which man deems sufficient for himself, to prevent her from following the bent of any passion or sudden inclination that may at the time have a slight ascendancy. With a sensible woman there is no more necessity for the "fear of hell" before her eyes, to prevent her