

SHELLEY.

I am no admirer of Shelley's philosophy, nor am I an intense admirer of his poetry. Many splendid qualities it has, but they are a splendid chaos; the light is scattered on the broken fringes of darkness; and, to be formed into beauty, the whole requires to be sobered by a spirit of more perfect order. Intellect there is in it, but it is intellect that has lived in its own abstractions, and has been little concerned in the business of life; fancy most gorgeous and most aspiring, but fancy not invigorated by common passions, or sharpened by common sense; goodness most generous and most disinterested, but goodness wasting its sympathies in contriving visionary remedies for visionary evils. I wish not now, however, to speak of Shelley's genius, but of his life.

Early in his career, he wrote a wild and beautiful poem, to which he added very wrong and violent notes. He was cast away from college, and commenced attacks, benevolent but delirious, on all the constituted forms of social existence. His fantastic theories were treated as realities; he was excommunicated from his family; his name was made odious in the mouths of men; he seemed to affrighted conventionalism a very monster of iniquity; his writings were blackened with the grossest abuse of virulent criticism; his very infants were torn by law from his arms; and with the bleeding heart of a youthful father, he had to seek a refuge in foreign lands.

Yet this man's short life, upon which the fire of genius had never time to soften into the light of wisdom, was gentle, kindly, gracious, generous, most unsensual, and most unselfish. If Shelley's philosophy was evil, his practice was not after the fashion of his philosophy; if to have had thoughts as pure as ever bathed in the sunshine of genius; if to have had affections as noble as ever laid themselves on the altar of humanity; if to have had a sense of right that would give no way to expediency, and a love of liberty that shrunk from no loss; if to have loved God in the highest idea of the perfect, and to have loved man in the widest sympathies of charity; if this was moral excellence, Shelley, I think, might claim it. The time was, I know, when to say thus much, would have seemed horrible irreligion; but we speak upon his ashes, and in the memory of a gifted spirit, prejudice itself has learned to be pitiful.

refinement, has been too frequently repeated to be dwelt on; its very repetition, however, proves the general fact. I would merely ask any one, what is the nature of his experience when delighted with some transcendent picture; when every view like the mist rising from nature's panorama on a summer's dawn, reveals some new glory to his mind? Why does his admiration increase with the study? It is, I conceive, thus,—each fresh glance lets in a portion of the artist's genius on his soul—he grows into the artist's spirit—as the inspiration deepens, his sympathy warms, and when that sympathy is most full, his admiration is at its highest point.

In a like manner may the works and manifestations of God be contemplated. We must by repeated associations find meanings in emotion and mingle them with our own mental emotions, and identify them with our heart's interests and affections before they lead us to their glorious author. Observe the apathy with which some pass through all that is beautiful or stupendous in earth, or heaven, or human history or human life—suns arise and set, seasons roll on in majestic and solemn change; flowers spring up and wither,—the dew and bloom of summer petrify with the snows of winter, and yet all these scarcely leave a note of time upon these impenetrable hearts, and scarcely a mark of interest on their bare and stony pathway! Contrast these with such as have exercised their spiritual sensibility; on whom every object and event makes its due impression; who live in the midst of vital interests; to whom the past is filled with mighty monuments; and who read on each, from Horeb to Calvary, an inscription written with the finger of Providence.

What is the difference between them? It is precisely this; the one by moral attention and energy, have made all these things minister to them of the good and beautiful, and indissolubly bound them up with their best experience; in fact, transmuted them into elements of their existence. The others stand out separate from them,—creation or Providence have no grasp on their thoughts, and their spirit within its prison-house, sleeps as insensible to those influences which bind the soul to God, as it is to the concealments of the eternal world. This pure moral experience then which constitutes real piety, must be the growth of culture and of labour, must be gathered in whilst the soul is open and materials at hand, and the day of truth and knowledge, and opportunity bright around us.

IMPORTANCE OF MORAL CULTURE.

THE influence of the higher poetry, and nobler works of art in producing, at least, intellectual

OLD AGE.

I HAVE called old age a night, yet without any intention of fixing on it the idea of gloom. All