

H. M. JOHNSON, POETESS.

The oft-quoted dictum of the Roman lyricist: "The Poet is born, not made," is most abundantly verified in the history of English literature. Facility of graceful expression, aptness in the conception of idea, refinement and delicacy of perception, power of fit and appropriate union and combination, which constitute the foundation and essential elements of success in poetry, must be the native inherent qualification of the poet. These qualities are, of course, naturally intensified by education: but where they are wanting in the natural formation of the mind, they can never, by any process, be attained. In support of the position that the gifts of poetic composition are natural, and not evolved by education, reference need be made only to Shakspeare or to one whose name and literary fame are second only to the universally conceded first—the Bard of Ayrshire. Both Shakspeare and Burns are the products of natural genius, not the results of artificial process. The world is but little indebted to education in either of these priests of human nature. The work of the teacher, the influence of association with books, men, and places, is formative, not creative.

Without these, but possessing the talents and inspiration of nature, many great and efficient writers have been. Without nature, learning is pedantry, and all attempted expression of thought affectation and cant.

This theory of the native origin of all that constitutes character in any poet is aptly illustrated in the works of the lamented lady whose name will, we trust, attract the eye of the reader to these remarks. Miss Helen M. Johnson, the sweet and swan-like songstress of the Eastern Townships, and by far the best of all contributors to the poetic gallery of the Exhibition of Canadian Literature, already somewhat extensive and auspiciously increasing, has established in her published works a just claim for high rank in the poetry of the English language. She has been for some time favorably known to the reading public of Canada, especially to this section of our County, and we trust that the circle of her admirers and readers will yet be very largely increased.

Many of our readers will like to hear some of the incidents connected with the "story of her birth." The "short and simple annals" of one who has charmed by the beauty and loveliness of her compositions cannot surely fail to be attractive; and, although we are not aiming at biographical interest solely, but rather wishing, as Miss Johnson's admirer and reviewer, to call attention to some of those salient beauties in her poems which have pleased those who may have read her works, and which may yet afford the same pleasure to some whose attention may not have been before called to them, yet we cannot better do so than by first introducing a few facts of personal interest. Born on the famed and romantic shores of Lake Memphremagog, in what was at that time (about 1830) a most un-literary and secluded corner of a young and comparatively unknown Province, her educational facilities were necessarily restricted. The

education
future ex;
be protect
existence.
by defect
and cultiv
rudiments
culture m
authors, P
son. It i
and beaut
Miss John
birth, fror
ceaseless ti
from that
historical c
Her cultiv
power; the
pletely the
of United
sinew of
personal in
British cha
called, poss
section of C
Democracy
ing sands
the strong
writings. I
Night" was
days under
This earl
Eternity,"
caused her
spontaneous
with a sect
its name fr
"Catholic I
she never ds
she did not
there was fo
in the short
ness and pai