

And the expression of this view is so rare as to be extremely precious. The famous women of prose and poetry have been of two main types. They have been given force without grace, or grace without force. We adore, but would not marry, Clytemnestra; we love, but do not fear, Desdemona. As far as failure was possible for him, Shakespeare's women are failures, or at any rate half-truths. Terrible women are for him wicked, almost masculine creatures—Goneril, Regan, Lady Macbeth. His gentler women, his Portias and Olivias, have not really an individuality or power of their own, but rather a whimsical humour in lieu thereof, charming but not profound. Perhaps Whitman, perhaps Swinburne, have come nearer to the truth; but only woman can reveal her Self.

It is immediately necessary to reassure those who suspect that the tremendous error—some would say insult—is intended of imagining all women to be the wild untrammelled creatures of impulse, the primitive and savage beings that Laurence Hope would have them to be, at all events in India. It would be as ridiculously unjust as to judge men from the types of Don Juan or Vautrin. Yet perhaps more of her sex sympathise with this elemental Muse of the whirlwind than would ever care to own or be able to realise the slightest affinity. Nor, again, is our poetess artist enough to give us a perfect presentation, or wide-minded enough to give us a complete one. But she has left us hopeful for the literature of the future—hopeful that she has made it easier for women to come into their heritage, and that these rough Atellane commencements may lead to nobler success than woman's old docility and clever imitation of male writers could ever have achieved.

Laurence Hope, then, is a sincere but imperfect artist; and this is no uncommon combination. How often may one not observe that certain crude verses, sadly marred by parodies of great and famous lines—verses where the expression of the thought is abrupt and obscure, yet whose precipices are sometimes visited by a gleam of atoning fancy—seem to ring more true than exquisite phrase and swelling harmony? Thus it is