

temple of fame, her work obliges us to modify such a verdict. It is true that she stands almost alone among the sisterhood of song, but her triumph is, in part, a suggestion and prophecy for her sex, and there is no need to apologize for saying that she is true woman in brain as well as in heart. She might have claimed, therefore, if she had chosen, her rightful immunities; for surely, in estimating the creative powers of women, some account must be made of the diversion of their noblest energies into the sacred channels of the home, and of the poetic dower which not unfrequently through "living poems," as Longfellow calls children, they bequeath to future generations.

Believing profoundly that the message of God is essentially personal in its nature, and therefore that she may have something to say which has never been said in the same manner before, Miss Barrett does not hesitate at the outset of her career, in "*The Seraphim*" and "*A Drama of Exile*," to challenge comparison with the immortal Milton. From the standpoint of literary criticism, the result may not be altogether fortunate; but the attempt is most instructive as illustrating the intensity of the author's belief in the guidance of the heavenly Muse, and her sense of obligation to follow implicitly whithersoever it may seem to lead her. Perhaps she exaggerates her favorite idea that she has a message from the Infinite, and partly misconceives the means which the Divine Spirit is likely to employ in order to fit its minister for a special work. But no one who follows her wild, impassionate verse, even with the keenest eye to its blemishes, can doubt the strength of her enthusiasm, or the sincerity of her purpose and aim. If she had been wanting in these qualities, she might have felt more diffident in dealing with those aspects of supernatural themes which are too lofty for any human powers, and from whose analysis men, as a rule, have been inclined to shrink. But Miss Barrett's religious emotions are so intense and overmastering that she must give them utterance. Even if Adam the Strong and Zerah the Bright One fail equally with ourselves in fathoming the mystery of the Atonement, their confused and faulty dialectic does not prevent us from catching the moral inspiration of their tragic theme. The authoress explains that her special purpose in "*A Drama of Exile*" is to set forth, from a woman's standpoint, the tender remorse, the noble self-sacrifice, the enduring affection of the first mother, Eve. Though the poem seems partly overshadowed by the matchless precedent of "*Paradise Lost*," the result may be said to justify the "adventurous