

## LITERATURE AND THE FINE ARTS.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

SAMUEL ROGERS, the last survivor, if we except Walter Savage Landor, of the poets of England whom we specially associate with the age of Scott and Byron, died at London on the 18th of December, at the advanced age of ninety-three. His rank among England's poets has long been assigned to him, and we cannot doubt that posterity will confirm the decision which two generations of his cotemporaries have attested in regard to the author of "Italy" and the "Pleasures of Memory." It may be that the biographer of the poet will now produce to us some further evidences that the poetic genius which manifested its powers for a brief period so vigorously, preserved the same power in later years, however rarely put forth; but it is a singular fact that he who has just passed away from the circle of admiring friends and cotemporaries, belonged as a poet entirely to a former generation. Our recollections only embrace the exhibitions of the poet's refined æsthetic tastes as manifested in the wedding of his verse to the younger sister art. The illustrated editions of the "Pleasures of Memory," and "Italy," chiefly by the pencils of Stothard and Turner, constitute an era in the history of English art. It was not merely the lavish expenditure of the wealthy poet, in the adornment of the offspring of his genius; for great as that was, it was probably equalled in the outlay for some of the ephemeral literary "Annals" of the same period. But the exquisite taste of the poet was employed with such a delicate tact in guiding the artistic illustrations, that its influence only became fully apparent, when publishers seeking to rival his success, in vain employed the same arts and devices, only to be mortified by the discovery that even Turner shone in the pages of Rogers with an inspiration which their money could not purchase from his pencil.

The poet's house in St. James's Place, was a perfect treasury of art. In the preliminary steps for illustrating his poems he is reported to have spent £10,000. Many drawings made for the purpose were not used, the work in its completed form preserving to us only the choice selection of the poet's taste, from the contributions of art to illustrate his muse. The paintings which adorned the poet's residence, though comparatively few in number, were gems of their kind, and of these he has bequeathed to the nation three well-known pictures—the Titian "Noli me tangere;" the Giorgione, a small picture of a Knight in Armour; and the Gaillo, "Head of Christ crowned with thorns."

The correspondence of Rogers, if given to the world, as doubtless it will be in part at least, will furnish illustrations not only of the literary history of the nineteenth century, but also of the closing era of the previous one, when men flourished as his literary cotemporaries, whom we have learned to class among the ancients. His life must also embrace in its narration many historical reminiscences of other kinds, of no less lively interest.

"The biography of Samuel Rogers," says the *Times*, "would involve the history of Europe since George III., then in the bloom of youth, declared to his subjects that 'he gloried in the name of Briton.' It is now more than a quarter of a century since that monarch was carried to his grave in extreme age, worn out with mental and bodily disease. Let us take the most notable historic drama of the century, 1793-1815—the rise, decline and fall of Napoleon Bonaparte.

"This was but an episode in the life of Samuel Rogers. He was a young man of some standing in the world, fully of an age to appreciate the meaning and im-