

face? No, we forget the shadow that rests upon its brightness, and reverence with grateful hearts its cheering and life-giving power. Thus should the world have forgotten the blemishes that sullied the character of Shelley, and remembered only the better and brighter attributes of his heart. But instead of this, he was censured by those who mistook his principles, and condemned by those who knew him not. Banished from the society he was fitted to adorn—deserted by fortune, whose favors his genius should have won, and depressed by bodily pain and sickness, he was well prepared to “teach in song” what he had learned in suffering, and to decorate his lays with the gems of thought which he had gathered from the stormy waves of grief. Weary of scenes where he had known but care and sorrow, and sick of the world that had used him so ill, he retired, with one fond and faithful friend, to a calm retreat in a brighter and more genial clime. There, with her whom he so beautifully styles his “own heart’s home,” he passed his few remaining days, and devoted his mind to the pursuits he loved. There, beneath the bright sky and balmy atmosphere, amid the breath of flowers and the music of murmuring waves, he gathered those bright fancies and beautiful images, which are the true attributes of poetry, and which constitute his greatest charm. There he wooed and worshipped the muse, who disdained not to lavish upon her erring votary, her highest and most precious favors; and there he penned those productions which will be admired so long as one spark of poetic feeling lingers in human hearts—productions which the world will yet learn to read, as a skilful flower-gatherer would cull his fragrant treasures from a wild and luxuriant garden—selecting only those which are beautiful in hue and grateful in perfume; and loving them not the less, that they grew amid rank and pernicious weeds. Ages may pass away ere the works of this poet are fairly and fully appreciated; but so sure as the morning sun dispels the shadows of night, the step of advancing time will dissolve the mist of prejudice that now lingers around his name.

FELICIA HEMANS, “the sweet song bird of England,” next claims attention. And here it may be as well to remark, that, to women in particular, the endowments of genius have too often been an inheritance of pain. Her heart is peculiarly fitted for love—so formed and fashioned for all the pure and gentle delights of affection, that nothing else can afford the same amount of happiness! and genius

though it may win many things beside—admiration, praise, friends, fame and fortune, it can never by its own power subdue that master passion to its will. This is the reason why women of splendid abilities have so often turned from the plaudits of a multitude, and sighed for the lot of some lowly but well-loved individual. Thus Sappho, whose lays, rich and glowing as her own sunny clime, had won for her such wealth of fame, cast away or counted as naught, all the honours she had gained, and destroyed herself because she could not command the love of one coveted heart. Thus Properzia Rossi, the celebrated female sculptor of Bologna, slighted and despised the lofty triumphs acquired by her art, and died in consequence of an unrequited attachment. Thus Madame De Staël, with her great and glorious endowments of mind, was heard to say, that she would willingly resign all her shining talents, and all the undying fame they had brought her, for the poor and perishing gift of personal beauty. And thus highly gifted women, in all ages of the world, have generally been the least successful in the pursuit of happiness.—But like illustrious men, they travel with a surer step to fame when their way lies over rugged and unlovely scenes. Adversity is to their hearts, what a stormy blast is to a bed of flowers—it may bend and bruise, and sometimes break the fragile things, but it is sure to call out all the sweet and precious perfume that lies hidden in their depths!

Mrs. Hemans is a striking proof that

“Strength is born

In the deep silence of long-suffering hearts,”

and her tuneful lays tell us that her mind must have been severely tried in the fiery ordeal of woe, ere it could have produced such pure and unalloyed treasures. We know not the exact motive of her griefs, yet we feel that she suffered much, for we hear, in every tone of the sacred melody she awakens, the voice of a sorrowing thought, though resigned spirit. In all her productions, there is the evidence of a heart formed for happiness, and deserving the highest allotment of earthly bliss, and yet how different was her lot? How peculiarly sad her fate? We have only to listen to a few strains of her heart-touching music, to know that her path was ever darkened by

“a shadow-tinging thought

With hues too deep for joy.”

Her songs are like the murmurs of the ocean shell, pining for its lost home; or like the warblings of the prisoned bird, mourning for its native heaven. Her poetry nullows every-