

or philosophy, disdained to address our imaginations in the most attractive and insinuating of forms. All the fine arts and sciences dress themselves in this charming style of personification.

The peculiar virtues of the female character are universally acknowledged, although the extent of intellectual endowment bestowed upon the lovely sex is sometimes questioned. However, when men too often lay claim to a superiority of understanding they have not yet presumed to arrogate an excessive title to moral excellence, and dignity, far more highly to be appreciated than mere intellectual superiority, and for a deficiency in which no amount of mental capacity can compensate. It must not be supposed that physical force and mental power are possessed, in equal degrees, by individuals or sexes, or that the first is an unerring type of the latter; and hence, we deny that there exists any *prima facie* ground for believing that inferiority of mind must be only consistent with forms acknowledged of lighter muscle, but finer contour.

Though widely prevalent the opinion of man's superiority of understanding, and though ancient the belief of the same; yet the history of every age will furnish examples sufficient to vindicate woman's claim to every degree of excellence, and her title to praise of every noble kind. Physically inferior though she be to man, and though the duties of her peculiar condition in the human family, have generally withdrawn her from scenes requiring exertions foreign to the gentler virtues of her nature; yet many instances adorn the history of our race, of woman uniting the highest and finest endowments of the intellect, with the soundest gifts of a strong understanding, and the purest virtues of a generous heart, wisdom, generosity, and truth illuminate the picture, while betimes courage, and even heroism of the highest and most exalted kind, throw around it a halo of unsurpassed renown. I leave it to critics in the matter, and spleenic satyrists to magnify the real or supposed weakness of the sex; but remember that it is because woman is so lovely and so justly prized, that generous minded men are so jealous of her fame, while the very brilliance of her amiable and endearing character exposes but too clearly to view, like spots upon the face of the sun, the weakness she inherits from a nature fallen in some degree, and originally it must be confessed, something but little lower than that of angels.

"Tis on the diamond that we mourn a spot,
The pebble may be solled, we heed it not,
Then gently can your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman,
If whiles they gang a kenning wrong,
To step aside is human."

In what walk of merit, has not woman in every period of the world appeared to the highest advantage. In the proud arena of science are female names inferior to none of their cotemporaries, and in periods of the highest mathematical knowledge and emula-

tion. Witness Hypatia in Alexandria, equally famed for beauty, modesty, wisdom and learning of every kind, with Agnes in Italy, learned in the most recondite mathematics. Natural philosophy has had its female seers, classical criticism and learning its Madam Dacier, and the lyre of the poetess has warbled the sweetest strains of love and harmony, from Sappho to our charming English countrywoman, Mrs. Hemans. Edward the Sixth, of England, although a boy of tender years, appeared a wonder of learning and knowledge to one of the first scholars and mathematicians of France, and his cousin, Lady Jane Grey, who perished at 17 years of age, was his companion in study and superior in attainments. The Thrones of Queens have been invested with the glory of martial renown, and happy and powerful England, the greatest nation of the world, can point to female reign for evidences of unrivalled prosperity founded upon the wisdom of legislation, and the fostering care extended to the spirit of noble enterprise, as well as the cultivation of the arts that embellish life, and ameliorate the condition of society.

Queens Elizabeth and our most gracious Majesty Victoria in England, like Augustus in Rome, have given a name of glory to the period of their prosperous reigns; Zenobia long withstood the powers of Roman Arms, and was a great and glorious Queen; Cleopatra spoke ten languages with fluency; the virtuous and lovely Julia, the daughter of Julius Cæsar, and the wife of Pompey, by her wisdom and amiable qualities preserved during her life, a degree of amity between the rival commanders, to each of whom she was so nearly and dearly related, beauty, virtue and wisdom, elevated to a throne, which she adorned, a cottage girl; and Catherine the First, Empress of Russia, was as well entitled to the surname of Great as was her husband, the illustrious Peter, who by a course of laborious pursuit and study, never emulated by any monarch, raised an empire from barbarism to civilization.

Sacred history, as well as profane, bears testimony to female excellence; the experience of past ages, unites with modern times, in proofs and evidences of the wisdom of the head, united with the dearest affections of the heart, in the fairest forms. The spirit of divine inspiration has been bestowed on the gentler sex; and Deborah, with the spirit of prophecy, and the wisdom of her counsels, added to the influence of her character and presence, gave strength to the arms of God's chosen people, and achieved their deliverance at a time when the stout heart of man, and the courage of their captain, quailed before the hosts of their oppressors. In what language should we express our admiration of the goodness, virtue and attachment of Ruth, and where find eloquence like her own to express, her inflexible and devoted purpose, in the sacrifice of every selfish feeling, to the

duties which her matchless affection imposed; goodness like hers could not go unrewarded, prudence such as she possessed, will ever be venerated by the good and feeling heart and the smile of heaven, will bless with abundant felicity, the life of one so virtuous, so good and wise. The self exiled Moabitess became the ancestress of illustrious kings, and the pious Christian will trace to the grand mother of David, the genealogy of Him whom we adore. There is a prevalent opinion which I approve, and which doubtless in many instances is founded on a correct observation of facts, and,

"Facts are chiefs that winna ding,
And cannot be disputed."

That many of the greatest men who have won distinction, and obtained renown, may trace their greatness to the early lessons received at a mother's knee, combining with and giving a generous impulse and a noble direction, to their own excellent endowments. If I desire a confirmation of woman's innate greatness of character, and of soul, I would ask no admission more favourable to my own views than this.

For if woman burned not with the ardour of patriotism, if her pulse were dead to the tone and feeling of the noblest heroism, if she formed no conceptions of enterprises requiring courage, fortitude, sagacity, and presence of mind,—if her breast warmed not with the fervour of devotion;—could she have ever been so many times as she has been, at once the joyful mother and successful tutress, and affectionate and discreet mistress of statesmen, of heroes, of poets and divines, or feeling them in inferior degree, could it be other than an accident that such mothers not only gave birth to, but reared and educated and stamped the character of men of the greatest souls, and noblest intellect, and purest virtues. Witness Alfred the Great in England, and the Emperor Alexander, the successor of the monster Heliogabalus at Rome; witness the piety, and learning, and poetry, of Dr. Watts. The false conclusion is unworthy of reason and reflection and must be repudiated, and men must no longer interpret woman's mild, and amiable demeanour and gentleness of disposition, and thoughtful and dispassionate moode of submissive deportment, into an argument of her mental inferiority.

If woman generally is not addicted to studies and pursuits of a certain character, it should be also remembered that there is a prevalent opinion that such studies and such pursuits are less adapted to their physical constitution and gentler dispositions, as well as to her manifestly natural, and appropriate cares. Woman is naturally in a dependent condition and peculiarly amenable to public opinion, which she always respects, and it is indeed a most excellent trait in woman's character, that she usually regards the wisdom of experience, and the just control of authority with greater deference than her brother man