

subject of his daily thoughts, and star of his after life. His imagination invested the loved and lost one with the attributes of divinity, and this apotheosis was approved by the world. Not only in his own mind, but in the minds of all who bent above his glowing page, she became an immortal goddess—the holy and beautiful spirit of his works! Dante had other troubles besides the loss of his early love. The party to which he had attached himself, and with which he had performed many a good deed for his country, was conquered by an opposing power, and the poet was stripped of the honours he had gained; banished from his native city and condemned, if he ventured within its bounds, to an ignominious and fearful death. Thus deprived of domestic happiness, deserted by fortune, and doomed to wander an exile from his dear native city, his “beloved and beautiful Florence,” he sought in his divine art, that consolation denied by everything else, and gave his undivided soul to the spirit of poesy. It was then he produced works which surpassed the promise of his happier years, and won for him the unfading chaplet of fame.

MILTON, the bard of high and holy themes, is another example. While the light of prosperity beamed around him, his mind, though towering far above its fellows, took not that eagle flight into the regions of thought that it did in after years of gloom. When misfortune came upon him in many forms; when his house was desolated by repeated losses, and darkened by repeated troubles; when infirmity, sickness and blindness, showered their accumulated evils upon his devoted head, his genius then shook off all earthly trammels, and soared to an amazing and unequalled height. When the visible world, with all its beauties, was forever shut out from his view, his mental vision lifted itself from earth and sought the glories of heaven. That a glimpse of these blessed regions was granted to his view we may not doubt, for the light that beams upon his page is surely a ray from celestial worlds, and the holy strains that vibrate from his lyre, are surely borrowed from the harmony of an angel choir.

Another, and a melancholy example, is to be found in the singular career of Byron. His first lesson in the school of adversity, was the knowledge of a personal defect, which, slight as it was, engendered a morbid sensibility that was near akin to grief. This first taught him to rely upon the resources of his mind, and to plume his spirit for a flight into the realms of poetry. But not 'till he was assailed by criticism, and his haughty spirit withered beneath

the lash of sarcastic reproof, did the Promethean spark that slumbered in his soul, kindle into a flame of startling and scorching brilliancy. But, even then, the deepest fountain of poetic feeling was unruffled and unawakened, until a colder and keener blast of sorrow swept over its surface. Not 'till his home was deserted—his hearth desolate, and his heart the ruined receptacle of blighted hopes and buried joys, did he breath forth that music which awed and enchanted the world. When friends forsook and kindred frowned; when the world looked coldly upon him, and

“Hatred’s shafts flew thick and fast;” when the deep, passionate love of his noble but erring nature, was cast back upon his aching heart; when the cup of life had lost every sweet, then, and not 'till then, did he strike the lyre with magic power, and produce that melody which resounds in every land, and awakens an echo in every heart!

SHELLEY, the deeply erring but highly gifted child of song, is also an example. He, too, was early taught in the severe school of affliction, and his otherwise tender and gentle nature, borrowed from grief a strength and elevation of thought, which gave his works at once a character beautiful and sublime. With a heart warmed by the kindest feelings; a soul alive to the purest sentiments; and a mind imbued with the true spirit of genius, he was indeed worthy to be loved and admired in life, and honored and lamented in death. But alas! he had a dangerous and, as many thought, demoralizing belief, which caused him to be frowned upon by the good, and persecuted by the bad, until he who *loved all living things*, and who would not harm the lowliest of God’s creatures was looked upon as a monster of guilt and wickedness. Had the mistaken and misguided world, granted him that clemency which his sensitive and gentle nature required and deserved, might he not have been won from the erring creed into which he had fallen to a better and juster view or divine things? His false belief was the only shadow that rested upon the brightness and beauty of his character, and that was a fault to be punished by his Creator, and not by his fellow-man. None but the all-seeing eye could penetrate the depths of that strangely constituted heart, and learn what was in truth its feelings and belief; and none but the Being of infinite wisdom was fitted to pass judgment upon the errors he alone could understand. Do we turn from the light and warmth of the sun, and despise its genial influence, because there are spots upon its sur-