

(ORIGINAL.)

LEAVES FROM MY PORTFOLIO.

I.

LOVE AND BEAUTY.

SOCRATES called beauty a short-lived tyranny; Plato, a privilege of nature; Theophrastus, a silent cheat; Theocritus, a delightful prejudice; Carnades, a solitary kingdom; Domitian said, that nothing was more grateful; Aristotle affirmed, that beauty was better than all the letters of recommendation in the world; Homer, that 't was a glorious gift of nature; and Ovid, alluding to him, calls it a favour bestowed by the gods.—*From the Italian.*

WHAT a host of bright and soul-stirring associations are comprised within this youth-catching subject! Under which, with conceded favour, we will venture a few observations, perchance guided by an experience which has neither been common place, nor limited altogether to our own personal observation.

There are few, we would say *none*, who, not yet having entered upon "the lean and slippered pantaloons," are not in a certain degree susceptible of the power of beauty—of beauty such as at times it is presented to us, with all its sweet and hallowing influences, in the form of kind and gentle woman. At least, such is the impression we have formed, although perhaps this has been from an acquired, yet not singular, habit of judging of others by ourselves; for be it confessed, that never a feeling of purer enjoyment has occupied our breast, than has at times kindled within us, as we have gazed upon some young and innocent creature, in whose expressive countenance and graceful form, we have discovered those attractions, for which, according to our creed, it would be a species of heresy to profess insensibility. Illustrative of our *penchant* in this way *twas* but the other day, whilst talking an afternoon stroll along *Notre Dame Street*, in turning the corner of *Place D'Armes*, (we are particular as to the locality,) that we encountered one of those lovely forms and faces, which occasionally cheer us in our onward pilgrimage through life, seeming to cast over our existence such a hue of ethereal feeling and sentiment, as is at times left on our minds by the impression of some sweet dream, wherein we have seen and conversed with angels.

Previously to this encounter we felt dull and low-spirited, unmoved by the genial ways of the bright-warm sun, which was pouring down upon us, and unexcited by the many gay equipages, and lively groups, which, redolent of wealth and pleasure, were constantly crossing our path. But after the casual meeting with the beautiful creature of whom we write, our sensations and ideas had undergone a total revolution—the hidden chain of association that binds us alike with the remembered past and ideal future, had been struck, and its vibrations brought to our desponding fancy, images of the most

lively and cheering description. The lovely being was evidently returning from school, at the time we refer to, and so vivid is the impression of unalloyed admiration, which her appearance has left on our mind, that we fancy we can see her now, even as she caught our attention then. Her reticule of dark velvet, apparently containing her school paraphernalia, suspended from her left wrist; her right arm raised to beckon some of her companions, who were loitering behind; and her whole form so disposed as to afford us a sufficient opportunity for observation. A pretty straw bonnet, trimmed with green ribbon, having a veil of the same colour attached to it, which hung gracefully over the left shoulder, surmounted a countenance, wherein the bright hues of health, and the mingled graces of a beauty, which partook both of the character of the woman and of that of the girl, from which she seemed just emerging, produced an expression of the most rare loveliness, which was sensibly heightened by a form of exquisite mould, displayed at the moment we speak of, (by the position which she had casually assumed,) to such advantage as the painter would have loved to profit by.

We have described this fortuitous encounter as producing an entire change in our sensations and ideas, at the time; of course, we experienced no sentiment beyond admiration, and it was only owing to that property of the mind being acted upon, in the way we have mentioned, that this change, furnishing us with a practical proof of the "power of beauty," independent of its love-inspiring influences, was produced. That power is, indeed, manifold in its influences. Besides rousing into existence our most powerful passions producing love, and anon despair, jealousy, and revenge, it is alike the object of our most tender wishes and desires; and, whether contemplated in the fair face of nature, as she sheds her loveliness over the earth, or viewed in the image of the great creator of the universe, it has, equally with the charms ascribed to music, the power to "soothe the savage breast." But it is this power, in woman which has the most immediate influence on our existence; not that we would measure beauty by any fixed rule or standard; for we agree with the poet—

"What's female beauty, but an air divine,
Through which the mind's all gentle graces shine?
They, like the sun, irradiate all between;
The body charms, because the soul is seen.
Hence men are often captives of a face,
They know not why, of no peculiar grace:
Some forms though bright no mortal man can bear;
Some, none resist though not exceeding fair."

Beauty, then, as we understand it, is the spirit of the golden dreams of our waking and of our sleeping fancy. It is that pervading power in nature which makes up the greatest measure of our earthly enjoy-