

"IN PARENTHESIS."

In reading the life of Shelley my attention was attracted by the following words which referred to his daughter, "(she married a Mr. Esdaile and died in 1876)." The article on Shelley was a long one, full of detail. It traced his life from birth to death, noted his characteristics, gauged the influences operating on them, enumerated the circumstances surrounding him, and here in the midst of all the elaboration was this epitome of a life—" (she married a Mr. Esdaile and died in 1876)."

How significant of what woman's life in the past has been: Think of those long years of childhood with its trifling sorrows which seemed so overwhelming to her, the torn aprons and the little aches and pains; the happy girlhood with its dreams and fancies, the dawning womanhood, love's awakening and her marriage (and this is the first thing, it seems, worthy of notice,) then we take up the life again with its gathering glooms and bursts of sunshine until—she died.

To her, life's brimming cup was as alluring as it appeared to Adam upon his first glad day in Eden, and as she drank its mingled sweet and bitter, life was to her as great and mysterious a thing as it was to him, and is this the essence of it all?—" (she married a Mr. Esdaile and died in 1876)."

What wonder that woman has had little of wisdom to add to the world's great store, that she has not often broken the bread of Truth to the hungry. Was not this her gospel in the past—marriage and death, prepare for marriage—prepare for death?

"A parenthesis is something coming *in beside*, a something which may be taken out without altering the sense"; and this is how most women have spent their lives, "in beside," touching the world only through their fathers, their husbands or their sons, and at last have been "taken out" without altering the sense.

But though that short pathetic sentence seems typical of woman's life in the past, it also touches us all. It is a characteristic of the human race, this desire to be important, to effect something. We wish to be loved, we can bear to be hated, but