

your darling boy. Let him, in choosing his play, follow the suggestions of nature.

Be not discomposed at the sight of his sand-hills in the road, his snow forts in February, and his mud-dams in April—nor when you look out in the midst of an August shower, and see him waddling and sailing and sporting along with the water-fowl. If you would make him hardy and fearless, let him go abroad as often as he pleases, in his early boyhood, and amuse himself by the hour together, in smoothing and twirling the hoary locks of winter. Instead of keeping him shut up all day with a stove, and graduating his sleeping room by Fahrenheit, let him face the keen edge of the north wind, when the mercury is below cypher, and instead of minding a little shivering and complaining when he returns, cheer up his spirits and send him out again. In this way, you will teach him that he was not born to live in the nursery, and to brood over the kitchen fire; but to range abroad as free as the snow and the air, and to gain warmth from exercise. I love and admire the youth who turns not back from the howling wintry blast, nor withers under the blaze of summer:—who never magnifies “mole-hills into mountains,” but whose daring eye, exulting, scales the eagle’s airy crag, and who is ready to undertake any thing that is prudent and lawful, within the range of possibility.

## Eminent Literary Ladies.

No. 8.

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

Few women have displayed a more masculine understanding or keener powers of observation, than the subject of the present sketch. Whether ably elucidating the principles of political economy, writing prize essays on religious subjects, composing pleasing and instructive tales, or publishing travels in both the old and the new world, she has shown herself to possess talents of the first order, and those too directed to high and benevolent purposes. She is, we believe, still living; but having been afflicted for some time with disabling illness, her literary career is probably closed. It has, however, been a long and laborious one. Almost every year since her youth, a new work has proceeded from her pen, and, even since her sickness, she has written several works addressed to the young, and breathing a spirit of congeniality with the buoyancy of that age which is surprising amid the languor of the sick room, and evinces the energy and cheerfulness of her well-ordered mind.

Harriet Martineau was born in the year 1802, at Norwich, in England, where her family had taken refuge from France after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and had since that time been engaged there in the manufacturing business. A delicate constitution and the infirmity of deafness, with which she has been troubled to a certain degree ever since, were the means of turning her attention in early life to reading and study. Fond, at the same time, of placing her thoughts upon paper, she had practised it so much, that she had scarcely passed through her teens when a volume from her pen appeared before the public. Her earlier works exhibit an inferiority to her later ones, though they possess the same moral aim, and the same clear and forcible style. Her writings, however, not only contributed to her own pleasure and the instruction of others, but, her family having become involved in their circumstances, proved the means of honorable support to her during the rest of her life.

The “Traditions of Palestine,” published in the year 1830, forms a new era in her literary career, and her productions, henceforward, bear the stamp of more matured genius and a higher-toned morality. But what most evinced the powers of her mind, was her successful competition about this time, for three premiums offered by the Association of Unitarians, (of which she is a member) for the three best essays on the means of introducing the doctrines of that body respectively among the Roman Catholics, the Mahometans, and the Jews. The prizes, adjudged by three distinct sets of judges, were awarded to the “same author—and that author—a woman—and that woman—Miss Martineau.”

The work, however, which permanently established her title to literary fame, was her “Illustrations of Political Economy.” Digesting in her powerful mind the great truths of this difficult, but highly useful science, she published her reflections in a series of twenty-four tales, each of which illustrated one of these leading principles. To have thus lucidly analyzed the great questions, which almost daily occupy the attention of statesmen as well as commoners, such as Free Trade, Foreign and Colonial Policy, Poor Laws, &c., and made them accessible and practically useful alike to the cottage and the palace, an achievement, which not only called forth the admiration of her own country, but caused many of the series to be translated into the chief languages of the continent. The tales are of themselves very interesting, and it is a high proof of her mental superiority that she could thus contrive so many interesting plots, each of which should practically illustrate one of the great doctrines of political economy, besides giving a clear and able exposition of the same during the course of the narrative. There were not wanting those, however, who blamed her choice of such a class of subjects. Among these was the “Quarterly Review,” of which it was said by a celebrated writer that, “while enlarging on what did not appear to it as ‘feminine,’ it certainly forgot what was gentlemanly.” She will be exculpated, however, we think, in the opinion of most; for if it was proper, for her to write at all, why should she not elucidate difficult subjects if she was capable of doing so, and thus contribute in a greater degree to the well-being of mankind? If men are considered the benefactors of their race when they grapple successfully with such subjects, why should it not be the same with the other sex, especially if it interferes with no other duty? Indeed, those, whether women or men, who are capable of becoming the “lights of the world” on some difficult question, ought to feel themselves under obligation to do so, and to consider it one of their first and highest duties to fulfill that obligation. The influence of an author may be extended through many countries and continued through many ages, but that of most other individual must necessarily be confined to a small space and exerted but a short time.

But Harriet-Martineau was of too simple-minded and high-souled a disposition to think of the opinion of others on such an occasion as this. Whenever she could do aught for the good of the human race, (and she seldom wrote without some good object) she “did it with her might.”

She was, however, like her contemporary Mrs. Jameson, a strenuous supporter of the rights of her sex. After all that has been written on this subject, the great remedy seems to lie in a “more enlarged and more enlightened education.” If women were as extensively and as soundly educated as the other sex, they need not fear for their other rights; and without this education, they would not be capable of properly using those rights.

While in the prime of her life and vigor, she spent some time in traveling, which her powers of keen observation, her vivid imagination, and her energetic spirit fitted her peculiarly to enjoy. Her travels in the east, and especially in Palestine, are full of interest, and her “America” is said to be less prejudiced than the works of most British travelers in the United States. Her strictures on Slavery are very severe, but she gives a view of this question, which should never be forgotten by writers and speakers on this subject:

“The nation must not be judged of by that portion whose worldly interests are involved in the maintenance of the anomaly; nor yet by the eight hundred flourishing abolition societies of the north, with all the supporters they have in unassociated individuals. The nation must be judged of as to Slavery by neither of these parties; but by the aspect of the conflict between them. If it be found that the five abolitionists who first met in a little chamber five years ago, to measure their moral strength against this national enormity, have become a host beneath whose assaults the vicious institution is rocking to its foundations, it is time that slavery was ceasing to be a national reproach. Europe now owes to America the justice of regarding her as the country of abolitionism, quite as emphatically as the country of slavery.”—*Society in America*, v. 3. p. 249.

She seldom wrote poetry, but many of her pieces are exceedingly beautiful. The following, as the month of August has just passed, will not be inappropriate in this place: