

FAIR WOMEN.

“ You've seen the brightest dawn of light,
You've seen the darkest depth of night ;
You've seen the fairest ray of love,
As fadeless as the stars above.
You've seen the shadow of despair,
You've seen a heart as light as air ;
And dreams, and hopes, and songs, and
sighs,
You've seen them in a woman's eyes.”

So sings the poet, and we all heartily concur, for women's eyes are the light of the world. A beautiful face is always

a pleasure to gaze upon, and like a lovely flower it sheds its radiance abroad.

It has ever been the theme of the writer, the poet, and the artist. Its charm is everlasting, and we yield unconsciously to its sway.

Beauty is indeed a great power. Its sceptre is triumphant. History revels in it ; it is coupled with almost every great crisis ; it is behind every important tale of all ages.



How many women have fashioned the destinies of nations with the charm of their personal beauty! Who has not dwelt with interest upon the career of Cleopatra, Egypt's wily queen, who ensnared Antony with her winning ways and wondrous beauty; of Blanche of Castile, mother of Louis the Ninth, called Saint Louis, a woman of great talent, of sincere piety, who bestowed on her son a strictly religious education, which materially influenced his character and policy; of Joan d'Arc, the beautiful French peasant girl, who felt inspired to fight so courageously for her country, who suffered so cruelly death at the stake, innocent though she was of any of the crimes attributed to her by the English; of Empress Eugenie, who combined beauty of person with intellect, the talk, at one time, of all



Europe, all paying her homage, all charmed by her winning personality? Time has done nothing to detract from the peculiar witchery of Mary Queen of Scots, or the romantic interest which attaches to her strange adventures. All the graces of nature were hers. Her mental accomplishments vie with her personal beauty. She will live through all the ages, a typical woman, fashioned after the times, and enthroned forever

in the hearts of the Scots.

Beauty is a great magnet, but mere outward beauty has little power to hold unless behind the veil is something found more substantial. For beauty is both internal and external. The latter kind is but the shadow; the former, the true essence, the divine light within, that speaks through the eyes, the windows of the soul. How many types are found



Miss Georgiana Berryman



Mrs. Edward Wharton.



in beauty's hand-book ; what charm in her variety ; for all can be pleased, all select their own ideals.

It is really remarkable how the style of beauty changes ; how one type succeeds another in each generation ; how our ideals are shattered from time to time. The Greeks delighted in beautiful forms, and to-day the French are

following in their footsteps. for, with them, beauty of figure is pre-eminent.

But it remains for our own country to reveal to us the combined charms of all the ages, the highest idealization of beauty, for in the American women of to-day we recognize the manifold graces of all the nations. They are the theme of the hour, and everywhere are they

honored and respected in this land of freedom and patriotism.

What a change from the early ages, for woman to-day holds her rightful place. How dreadful to think of the time when women were little better than slaves; when they received not the slightest recognition; when education for them was deemed unnecessary; when duties of the household were their highest aims! And so often has Penelope, Queen of the wandering Ulysses, been introduced by Homer at her loom, that the story of Penelope's web has become emblematic of woman's endless work.

But still there were exceptions. We are told of Corinna, a Theban poet, who five times bore away the palm in triumph from the celebrated Pindar; and of Aspasia, who instructed Pericles, the Athenian statesman and philosopher. The Romans were the first people who allowed to women public liberty and thought the cultivation of their minds as desirable as the ornamentation of their persons. In Germany they were entitled to a share in political government. They were considered to possess a certain kind of divinity, and a prophetic wisdom was ascribed to them. During the tournament ages, when chivalry was at its height, woman's beauty sat enthroned in the lists, for none "but the brave were thought worthy of the fair."

A woman! What a wondrous mechanism! What a combination of indescribable charms! A good woman, how powerful her influence, how benefitting is her presence! A beautiful woman is the highest idealization of our hopes.

Little did Shakespeare dream, when he

gave to us those ideal characterizations of his brain, that ere long the living prototypes would be revealed, that the portraits he had hung in the hearts of the world would walk from their frames and fulfil his predictions. The Antigones and Iphigenias of the classic age, beautiful impersonations though they be, are cold, stately, statuesque, beside the flesh and blood realities of to-day. The very pulse of the nation vibrates with woman's glories, with her transcending loveliness. A Reynolds, a Romney, or

a Gainsborough could have conceived of no ideal type that has not its *alter ego* in our living midst.

Woman's influence has always been felt, for her intuitive powers, her spiritual tendencies, are always important factors for good. Elizabeth of England was the first sovereign in that country to encourage literature, and much was accomplished by her. Such shining lights as Bacon, Shakespeare, and Spenser were produced during her

reign. In the literary field woman boasts of many bright stars of her sex. Here we have a Lady Mary Montague, a woman of wonderful intellectual powers, whose letters will live always and rank among the English classics. In physical sciences we see a Sommerville, a Herschel; in political economy, a Marat, a Martineau; in juvenile teaching, a Hannah Moore, a Maria Edgeworth. In vigorous intellect, wonderful powers of observation and knowledge, Madame de Staël is a bright light—a woman of superior intellect, sarcastic and daring, one whom even Napoleon feared.

But our American women of to-day stand the comparison well. In every direction are they becoming prominent.





In literature they are surpassing all expectations. Here we have a Mrs. Humphrey Ward, a Margaret Deland, a Mrs. Hartwell Catherwood; in the drama, an Ada Rehan, a Clara Morris, a Georgie Cayvan, and hosts of others equally as well known, who are exerting themselves to elevate this branch of art. In architecture, painting, sculpturing, science—in fact, in every field they are conspicuous.

Womanhood to-day seems to have reached the perfection of its charms, physically and mentally, for outdoor sports of all kinds demand woman's attention.

Woman's bright intellectual powers, her charming manner, her *naïveté*, her



Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin.

stately presence, her winning smile, give her pre-eminence everywhere, and the nineteenth century woman will go down to posterity as a worthy specimen of her sex.

Women are the poetry of the earth, the sweet stars ever bright, whose souls are the forget-me-nots of the grave. We could never exhaust her capabilities, try her as we might. Well have the poets sung her praises, but only justly. The ideals of poets are always

interesting characters for us to study, and we never tire of them; there is always a potent charm, a new grace, revealed which makes us linger over them again and again.

Goethe's *Marguerite* always charms us. For her we have a deep love, a profound pity, when she tells us "her



Miss Fanny Tailer.



Mrs. Fernando Yznaga.



peace is gone, her heart is sore." Ten-nyson's types always please. His *Maud*, his *Elaine*, the sweet "Lily of Astolot," pure as the flower from which she was called, delight us again and again. And do we not recognize the charms of her of whom Byron said :

She walks in beauty like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark or bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes
That mellowed to the tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

In Burns' "Highland Mary" we see a sweet rustic maid, simple and true. Tender was Burns' love for her. How touching and pathetic these lines, "To Mary in Heaven" :

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallowed grove
Where by the winding Ayr we met
To live one day of parting love
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past ;
Thy image at our last embrace.
Ah ! little thought we 'twas our last !







Mrs. W. W. Phipps.

In Scott's "Lady of the Lake" we see a beautiful Scottish maiden, and her charms are plainly revealed to us in these lines written by him :

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace
Of fairer form or lovelier face !
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served, too, in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow ;
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew ;
Even the slight harebell raised its head
Elastic from her airy tread ;
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear !



Miss Clara Wright.

In Longfellow's "Evangeline," that pure Acadian picture, we see sweet simplicity symbolized, and we love to dwell on the tender graces of the heroine. How well does our "dear poet" depict her charms ! Hear what he says :

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seven-
teen summers ;
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows
on the thorn by the wayside,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath
the brown shade of her tresses !
Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine
that feed in the meadows,
When in the harvest heat she bore to the
reapers at noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale. Ah ! fair in
sooth was the maiden.



Miss Bianche E. Cruger.

Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn,
while the bell from its turret
Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the
priest with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters
blessings upon them,
Down the long street she passed, with her
chaplet of beads and her missal,
Wearing her Norman cap and her kirtle of
blue, and the earrings
Brought in the old times from France, and
since, as an heirloom,
Handed down from mother to child, through
long generations.
But a celestial brightness, a more ethereal
beauty,
Shone on her face and encircled her form
when, after confession,
Homeward serenely she walked with God's
benediction upon her.
When she had passed, it seemed like the
ceasing of exquisite music.

Shakespeare's types are the highest.
His creatures were—

Beings breathing thoughtful breath,
Travellers between life and death,
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill ;
Perfect women, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command :
And yet spirits still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

But the poet's ideals are living realities which are passing before us day after day, shedding their lustre in this romantic universe of ours, bidding us follow the highest paths, the noblest ways. Women are not really bright, but are



Mrs. C. A. Post.



Mrs. Frederick Gebhard.

even this direction. It remained for Jeremy Taylor to give us a model comparison, and a most excellent one. He says : "Man is strong, woman beautiful ; man, daring and confident ; woman, diffident and unassuming ; man is great in action, woman in suffering ; man shines abroad, woman at home ; man talks to convince, woman to persuade and please ; man has a rugged heart, woman a soft and tender one ; man prevents misery, woman relieves it ; man has science, woman taste ; man has judgment, woman sensibility ; man is a being of judgment, woman of mercy."

But nowhere is woman's highest and best influence more felt than in the home, for here she works, not like the sculptor with the marble, that shall

modest and retiring, often more so than they should be, thus hiding their talents from the world, thinking them too insignificant to display.

But what if the little rain should say :

"So small a drop as I
Can ne'er refresh the thirsty plain ;
I'll tarry in the sky."

It is most interesting to see how men and women have been compared at all times, and how generally men had the ascendancy. Plato, that wise old Grecian philosopher, considered women men's equals in everything but physical strength. Voltaire put them on a level with men in all things but invention. But women are fast gaining ground in



Mrs. Kennedy Tod.

crumble into dust, nor like the painter upon the canvas, that shall perish, but upon mind, upon spirit, which is to last forever and always bear the impress of a mother's moulding hand.

How many men there are who owe all to their mother; how revered and honored her name is with them! What a blessing to think that even though the mother has long been gone from us, we are enabled to keep her memory fresh by her old-time portrait! What has

photography not accomplished? Its stride onward is really wonderful. These delightful little miniatures are excellent types of American women. Miniature painting, with the delicacy of touch and fineness of skill it requires, is an exquisite art. What an excellent way of preserving fair faces, when the originals shall long have ceased to live!

No one loves better the charm of beauty than the artist, and untiring is his effort to produce on canvas "ideal





women." What names he bestows on them—one is Simplicity, another Innocence, another Coquetry, another Purity, and so on. All ideal attributes are granted them, all graces centred in their faces. What charming specimens of women's loveliness have been handed down to us from the brush of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Thomas Lawrence, George Romney, and Gainsborough.

Fair women of England have been

most carefully and elegantly preserved for posterity by these great masters. The picture we reproduce of "Lady Grosvenor" is by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of all the painters of his age the most gifted in portraying women; and it was of him Lord Byron said that Burns' lines were most appropriate:

"His 'prentice han' He tried on man,
And then He made the lasses."

Lady Grosvenor was one of the most



celebrated beauties of her day, and we see from her portrait that there was grace in every line, and strong character and intellect in her sweet, winsome face. The beautiful and talented Sarah

Siddons has been kept in memory by her portraits by Reynolds and Gainsborough, the former representing the "Tragic Muse," which was said by Barry to be, both for the ideal and execution, the finest picture of its kind in the world, and which Lawrence pronounced to be indubitably the finest female portrait ever painted.

The one by Gainsborough is a dream of poetic loveliness, showing off her classic face to perfection.

The beautiful but erratic Lady Hamilton was with Romney a favorite subject, and many are her portraits painted by this master's hand, revealing all her charms, showing her in all her varied moods.

But no fairer faces will adorn the pictured walls of the coming ages than the American women of our time. It was clearly to be seen, at the recent Exhibition of Portraits of Women in New York, that the keenest interest was shown for our own beauties, those of the past ages eliciting, in comparison, only a passing glance.

Of the other pictures here reproduced two are portraits by American artists, and the remainder are photographs pure and simple, untouched by the artist's idealization.



Mrs. August P. Montant