

is to work on in faith and if no man can be found who is willing to undertake the task of building up the school, we can, to a certain extent, build it up ourselves by doing our best for its advancement both here and at our homes.

The Students' Scrap Book,

JOHN KEATS.

The poetry of England at the close of the 18th century was peculiarly subjective. The opinions of men colored their writings, and genius was fettered by the bonds of principles previously established. The critics were unjust and the majority of them, incapable of appreciating true literary worth. They delighted in discovering the faults, rather than the excellencies of an author, and lacking keen insight, criticised from mere prejudice.

John Keats fell beneath the blow of such adverse judgment, but he has since gained immortal fame, while his destroyers have sunk far beneath him in the opinions of mankind. His school life passed away quietly, unmarked by any important success or failure.

On first reading Spencer, the "Poets poet," he became inspired with the poetic spirit to such a degree, that his apprentice work became distasteful, and was soon abandoned. His naturally sensitive nature rendered him capable of the finest perceptions. Though not profound, he nevertheless possessed that gift which enabled him to wreath graceful garlands of verse.

"*Endymion*" is by far the longest and most fantastic of his poems. The passion of the young god for a dream, his seemingly interminable wanderings through Elysian fields, in search of the beautiful creature, Diana, while divine music lulls his senses, and flowery mazes surround his foot steps, all lend an irresistible enchantment. Although the poem excels in beauty, yet it is not of the strongest type. The "Deities of Greece" with their passions and experiences, are brought within the range of our sympathies. Keats was truly successful in portraying the mighty deeds of the invincible immortals of Olympus. He gave an ethereal touch to poetry, and we gaze, as it were, into the mirrored face of nature. His fancy was unfettered speeding without an impulse of the will; perfecting itself in *Endymion*, until it became as his glorious vision—"the completed form of all completeness."

The descriptions are unparalleled. As in a painting each successive stroke, if guided by a skillful hand, serves only to increase the beauty and effect, so as we progress in *Endymion* each tint and shade more fully completes the magic of its charms.

Though often lost in the labyrinth of the poem, we grant to the author, the possession of rich imagination, picturesque description, and a power to stir the finest emotions. He lacked majesty, yet though he was not wealthy in the dower of spanning wisdom, and did not know the shiftings of the mighty winds that blow hither and thither all the changing thoughts of man, yet before him there ever rolled a vast idea; he had seen the end and aim of poetry.

The fact that he belonged to a new school of poets, and embraced heartily their principles, brought upon him the

lowering clouds of sarcasm and bitter slander which enveloped the rest of his life in dense darkness. The adoration of his few intimate friends, was only equalled by the malignity of his enemies. Those who filled the columns of the "Quarterly Review" with derisive articles concerning the youthful production "*Endymion*" considered as madness—his magical utterance, and as sensuousness his revels in the beauties of nature. Their sneer was final, and influenced some of the noblest minds of the age. "But this is human life," he says, "the deeds, the disappointments, all humanbearing in themselves this good to show how quiet death is." As the reviews desired, he was silenced—it was the deep stillness of the grave, but their work was incomplete.

He gives forth utterances again, and lifts the thoughts of men as of old. Keats could be subjected to no severer criticism than his own, and his poetry improved as he became more critical. His most scholarly and classical epic production was checked before it was completed, and remains—a mere fragment. In *Hyperion*, Keats truly reaches the sublime. His style is purified and unembellished, and though the beautiful predominates, his perceptions are clearer and he displays remarkable force of execution. The deposition of Saturn from the throne, which is usurped by Jupiter, is the important feature. This crowning work elicited nothing but praise, which was well merited.

Endymion is the outgrowth of youthful fancies; *Hyperion*, of intense feeling, excelling and surpassing in power. The former may be compared to the roseate hues which adorn the horizon proclaiming the approach of Apollo the latter, to the glory of meridian splendor.

One possessing intrinsic beauties, the other a luminous centre, from which emanates a drainless shower of light.

The cry of Keats' heart was uttered in accents "*mournful strange*" in the "Ode to the Nightingale." He desired to "leave the world unseen and fade away with the birds into the 'forest dim.'" Intermingled with praises of the immortal songster, we find an analysis of his mental state at the time. A tinge of melancholy and despondency characterizes others of his poems. "The Eve of St. Agnes" founded upon a charming legend, possesses an elegance of diction and delicate imagery seldom surpassed. In "Sleep and Poetry" he displays a marked refinement of fancy.

Matthew Arnold says—He who could so well render things seen and temporal, must also be able to interpret the unseen and eternal." Shelley proved a friend to the persecuted one, who willingly acknowledged his greatness. In the "Adonais" an elegy on the death of Keats, he pays the following tribute to his genius:—"his fate and fame shall be an echo and a light unto eternity, and his soul like a star, beacons from the abode where the eternal are." Shelley, who reared such a lasting memorial to the poet, was an atheist; Keats, free in religion, attempted to displace the stilted poetry of the former century, by lithe and graceful verse. Both were poets of the true English sort and both martyrs. Shelley revealed the truth, as he believed, in all its simplicity; Keats, the buried magic of nature. His poems are chaste and pure, a reflection of his own soul.

Keats died at Rome when twenty-five years of age, after a poetic career of three years. This epitaph of his own dictation is upon his tombstone—Here lies one whose name was writ in water." The nightingale sobs forth