

These more or less ample threads of silver water which escape from the chinks and crevices of a solitary rock, or, like the Thames, from the soil of a verdant meadow, form in a landscape one of its most pleasing and poetical features. By the translucency of their waves, which have sprung from the mysterious depths of the earth—by the musical murmur of their unbroken flow—and by the rich ferns, grasses, and flowers, or delicate velvety mosses which clothe their banks and derive nourishment from their copious freshness—they exercise a peculiar and powerful influence upon the soul of man. The genial moral impression which they awaken in us, has rendered famous certain springs of antiquity. Who knows not the source of Hippocrene, situated at the foot of the haunted slopes of Mount Helicon; or

“The inspired
Castalian spring,”

in the sacred valley of Parnassus, both consecrated to the Muses of Paganism? A mean and gloomy village marks to-day the site where formerly stood the renowned Delphos, and that mysterious temple of Apollo where the Pythoness drew her inspiration from the sweet “waters of Castaly.” The fountain, immortalized by so many memories of classic Greece, is now dedicated to St. John; near its margin a small chapel has been erected; a fig-tree, surrounded by bushes and thick grasses, overshadows its basin. The freshness of its waters is so remarkable that only to dip your hand into them brings on a fit of shuddering. Did not the Pythoness mistake for the divine inspiration that access of fever which the icy touch of this cold wave could not fail to produce?

[Shelley, in bright-coloured verse not unworthy of his theme, has celebrated one of the ancient fountains named after the nymph Arethusa. It was situated in Eubœa :—*

“Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains,
From cloud and crag
With many a jag
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks
With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;
Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams:
And gliding and springing,
She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
The earth seemed to love her,
And heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.”]

Another famous fountain of Arethusa is that in the island of Ithaca, where the flocks of Ulysses quenched their thirst. “Go,” said

* [Shelley, “Poetical Works,” ed. 1853, p. 514.]