

H. L. V. DEROZIO

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Manjhi
Dept. of English
J. N. College, Madhubani

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Continuing - - -

The same sonnet shows Derozio's fondness for Greek mythology in its very opening line -
Where are thy waters, Lathe?

Derozio seems to have been particularly fond of the sonnet form. The series of five sonnets addressed to "Night" contain arresting lines such as -

For loneliness and thought this is the hour...
Swift as the dark eyes glance, or falcon's flight
He had an eye for Nature in its twin aspects of Beauty as well as Terror - There was a dance among the leaves and silence and rest had no existence this. In one of his sonnets, Derozio calls Death his "best friend" he is daunted neither by death nor by fate -

O tyrant fate! Thus shall I vanquish thee
For out of suffering shall I gather pleasure.

There is, however, a certain dullness and monotony about Derozio's verse. His poetry lacks two essential qualities of romantic poetry - *curiosa a felicitas* and ideal beauty. It is the absence of these qualities coupled with a predilection for the use of the common place both in expressions and in

ideas that dull the effect of Derozis's poetry. His ideas and thoughts too tend to be commonplace banal and hackneyed. The sonnets "Yorick's skull and "Dust" are full of obvious and commonplace ideas unrelieved by any striking originality of expression.

Derozis's handling of Indian classical mythology is often uncertain. A typical example of this wavering attitude towards the Indian myth and its poetic use is "The Eclipse". The poet describes the moon as sickly and attributes "cold" "inconstancy" to it. In the next line, the moon is no longer "the moon but is a chariot whose beams bring nightly dreams of love" to maids.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, Derozis was undoubtedly the first Indian to attempt to write romantic poetry with in English. He definitely made a start to give expression to an Indian personality through the medium of English. Mr. Datta compares Derozis to Keats, for, in both men there was a passionate temperament combined with unbounded sympathy with Nature. Both died while their powers were not yet fully developed. Derozis was, in short, the first of our inheritors of unfulfilled renown.