

**KEATS, SHELLEY AND
SHAKESPEARE. STUDIES
& ESSAYS IN ENGLISH
LITERATURE. [1912]**

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Keats, Shelley and Shakespeare. Studies & Essays in English Literature. [1912] by S. J. Mary Suddard

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KEATS SHELLEY AND SHAKESPEARE

STUDIES

&

ESSAYS

IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

S. J. MARY SUDDARD, L.L.A.

FELLOW UNIV. GALL.

UNIV. OF
CAMBRIDGE

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at the University Press

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

<i>Abridged Title</i>	<i>Date of Composition</i>
Versification of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	November (?) 1905
Shakespeare's <i>Sonnets</i>	" —
<i>Astrophel and Stella</i>	December —
Swift's Poetry	February 1906
<i>Hymn to Intellectual Beauty</i>	March —
John Inglesant	May —
<i>Hellas</i>	Spring —
Keats's Evolution	" —
Keats's " <i>Prelude</i> "	June —
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	February 1907
Addison's Humour	March —
Keats's Style	May —
Chaucer's Portraiture	Spring —
<i>The House of Life</i>	" —
Ben Jonson and Shakespeare	" —
Wordsworth's "Imagination"	Autumn 1908 (?)
Shelley's Transcendentalism	" — (?)
Shelley's Idealism	(?)

SARAH JULIE MARY SUDDARD, b. May 13, 1888, d. May 29, 1909.

KEATS, SHELLEY AND SHAKESPEARE
STUDIESTHE EVOLUTION OF KEATS'S
MIND

THE story of the "pang-dowered poet whose reverberant lips And heart-strung lyre awoke the Moon's eclipse" is the story of a soul working out its own salvation in unswerving obedience to its own laws of development, against the painfully degrading accidents of its fate.

Keats's was a lethargic sort of mind borne down by the weight of its own riches, one that, in a normal way, needed much sunlight and manuring before putting forth its blossoms—"a complex mind, imaginative and yet careful of its fruits, who would exist partly on sensation and partly on thought," and to whom "it was necessary that years should bring the philosophic mind¹." Such a nature required more than common soil, sturdy props, liberal but sympathetic pruning, more than the average warmth of exposure, above all plenty of time to strike deep roots and gather strength before the season of production began. As he well knew, what he wanted was "a free and healthy and lasting organisation of heart, and lungs as strong as an ox, so as to be able to bear unhurt the shock of extreme thought and sensation

¹ *Letters*, November 1817.

without weariness¹," a thorough mental training to fortify his instincts and correct their occasional tendencies to go astray, judicious criticism to lop the luxuriance that retarded his growth while cherishing and bringing the most promising buds into light, first and foremost a long life in which to shoot up to his full height, spread out to his full girth unchecked.

But fate was against him from the first hour of his birth. A constitution, sound to all outward appearance, but doomed in advance by a disease which literally ate him away before the age of twenty-six—such was the body that was to contain the throbbings of the great poetic heart; a scanty education supplemented by the pernicious influence of Leigh Hunt—such the preparation for the mind; the taunts of political antagonists, or at best the reluctant and measured admiration of brother-poets—such the criticism to encourage and direct his efforts. A brief span of life was allotted, and that brief period filled with anguish both physical and mental such as few have undergone. Under such treatment many a mind would have pined away unexpressed. "For the best of men," he tells us, "have but a portion of good in them; a kind of spiritual yeast that creates the ferment of existence, whereby a man is propelled to act and strive and buffet with circumstances²." Fortunately for Keats, the proportion of yeast was large. His intuitive knowledge of what his own nature required led him to create within himself a kind of second world that counteracted the chilling influences of the

¹ *Letters*, August 1819.

² *Ibid.* January 1818.