

**SAPPHO; MEMOIR, TEXT,
SELECTED
RENDERINGS AND A
LITERAL TRANSLATION**

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Sappho; memoir, text, selected renderings and a literal translation by Henry Thornton Wharton

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HENRY THORNTON WHARTON

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BY

HENRY THORNTON WHARTON

M. A. OXON.

WITH PARAPHRASES IN VERSE BY
ANNE BUNNER



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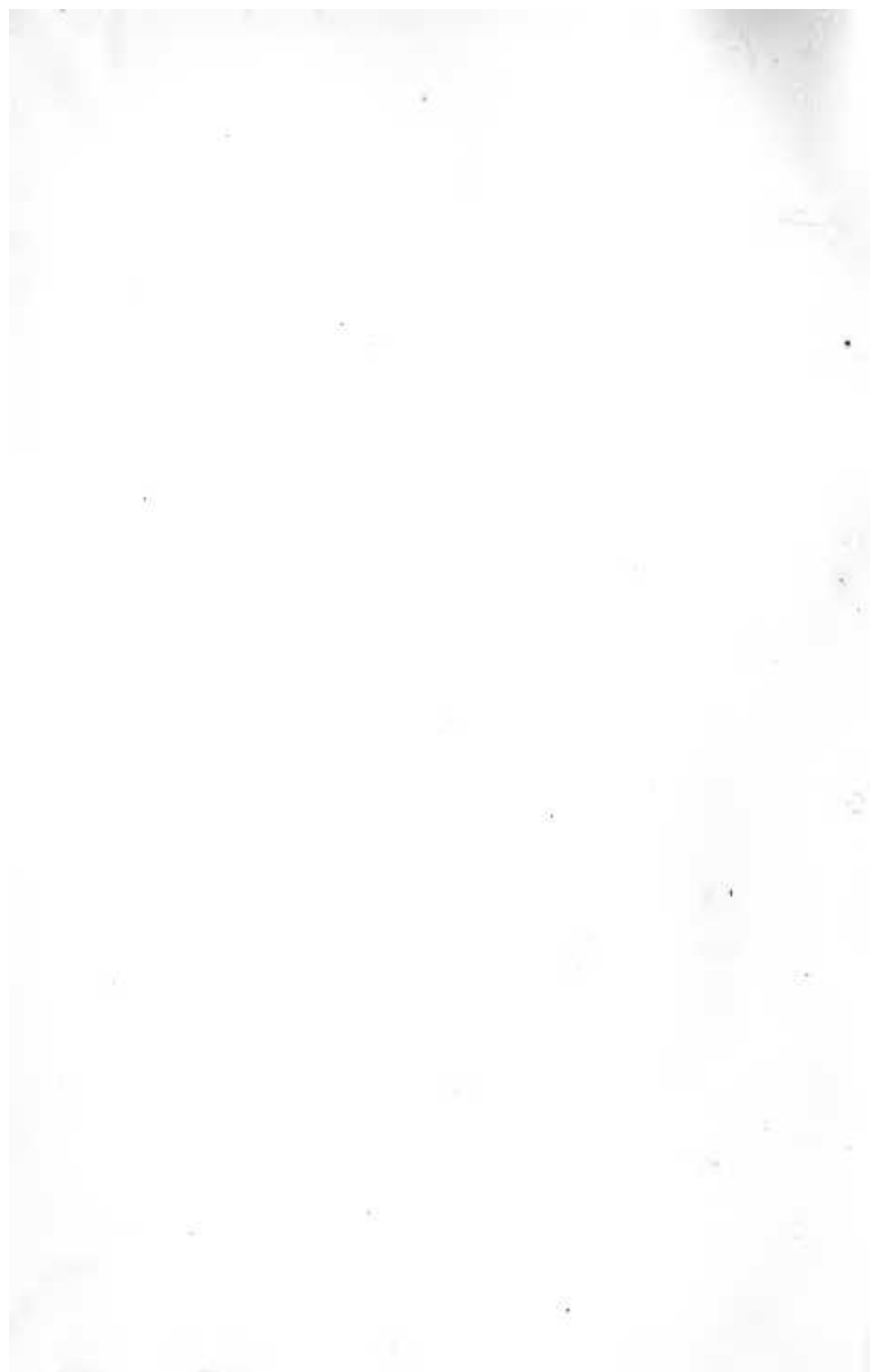


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Πάντα καθαρὰ τοῖς καθαρῶις



PREFACE



APPHO, the Greek poetess whom more than eighty generations have been obliged to hold without a peer, has never, in the entirety of her works, been brought within the reach of English readers. The key to her wondrous reputation — which would, perhaps, be still greater if it had ever been challenged — has hitherto lain hidden in other languages than ours. As a name, as a figure pre-eminent in literary history, she has indeed never been overlooked. But the English-reading world has come to think, and to be content with thinking, that no verse of hers survives save those two hymns which Addison, in the *Spectator*, has made famous — by his panegyric, not by Ambrose Philips' translation.

My aim in the present work is to familiarize English readers, whether they understand Greek or not, with every word of Sappho, by translating all the one hundred and seventy fragments that her latest German editor thinks may be ascribed to her:

Love's priestess, mad with pain and joy of song,
Song's priestess, mad with joy and pain of love.

SWINBURNE.

PREFACE

I have contented myself with a literal English prose translation, for Sappho is, perhaps above all other poets, untranslatable. The very difficulties in the way of translating her may be the reason why no Englishman has hitherto undertaken the task. Many of the fragments have been more or less successfully rendered into English verse, and such versions I have quoted whenever they rose above mediocrity, so far as I have been able to discover them.

After an account of Sappho's life as complete as my materials have allowed, I have taken her fragments in order as they stand in Bergk, whose text I have almost invariably followed. I have given (1) the original fragment in Greek, (2) a literal version in English prose, distinguished by italic type, (3) every English metrical translation that seems worthy of such apposition, and (4) a note of the writer by whom, and the circumstances under which, each fragment has been preserved. Too often a fragment is only a single word, but I have omitted nothing.

It is curious to note how early in the history of printing the literature of Sappho began. The British Museum contains a sort of commentary on Sappho which is dated 1475 in the Catalogue; this is but twenty years later than the famous "Mazarin" Bible, and only one year after the first

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book was printed in England. It is written in Latin by Georgius Alexandrinus Merula, and is of much interest, apart from its strange type and contractions of words.

The first edition of any part of Sappho was that of the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, by H. Stephanus, in his edition of Anacreon, 4to, 1554. Subsequent editions of Anacreon contained other fragments attributed to her, including some that are now known to be by a later hand. Fulvius Ursinus wrote some comments on those then known in the *Carmina Novem Illustrium Feminarum* published at Antwerp, 8vo, 1568. Is. Vossius gave an amended text of the two principal odes in his edition of Catullus, London, 4to, 1684.

But the first separate edition of Sappho's works was that of Johann Christian Wolf, which was published in 4to at Hamburg in 1733, and reprinted under an altered title two years later. Wolf's work is as exhaustive as was possible at his date. He gives a frontispiece figuring all the known coins bearing reference to the poetess; a life of her — written, like the rest of the treatise, in Latin — occupies 32 pages; a Latin translation of all the quotations from or references to her in the Greek classics, and all the Latin accounts of her, together with the annotations of most previous writers and copious notes by himself,