VARIOUS

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OLYMPUS AND ASGARD

How remote from the nineteenth century of the Christian era lies the old Homeric world! By the magic of the Ionian minstrel's verse that world is still visible to the inner eye. Through the clouds and murk of twenty centuries and more, it is still possible to catch clear glimpses of it, as it lies there in the golden sunshine of the ancient days. A thousand objects nearer in the waste of past time are far more muffled, opaque, and impervious to vision. As you enter it through the gates of the "Ilias" and "Odusseia," you bid a glad adieu to the progress of the age, to railroads and telegraph-wires, to cotton-spinning, (there might have been some of that done, however, in some Nilotic Manchester or Lowell,) to the diffusion of knowledge and the rights of man and societies for the improvement of our race, to humanitarianism

and philanthropy, to science and mechanics, to the printing-press and gunpowder, to industrialism, clipper-ships, power-looms, metaphysics, geology, observatories, light-houses, and a myriad other things too numerous for specification,—and you pass into a sunny region of glorious sensualism, where there are no obstinate questionings of outward things, where there are no blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realized, no morbid self-accusings of a morbid methodistic conscience. All there in that old world, lit "by the strong vertical light" of Homer's genius, is healthful, sharply-defined, tangible, definite, and sensualistic. Even the divine powers, the gods themselves, are almost visible to the eyes of their worshippers, as they revel in their mountain-propped halls on the far summits of many-peaked Olympus, or lean voluptuously from their celestial balconies and belvederes, soothed by the Apollonian lyre, the Heban nectar, and the fragrant incense, which reeks up in purple clouds from the shrines of windy Ilion, hollow Lacedaemon, Argos, Mycenae, Athens, and the cities of the old Greek isles, with their shrine-capped headlands. The outlooks and watch-towers of the chief deities were all visible from the far streets and dwellings of their earthly worshippers, in that clear, shining, Grecian atmosphere. Uranography was then far better understood than geography, and the personages composing the heavenly synod were almost as definitely known to the Homeric men as their mortal acquaintances. The architect of the Olympian palaces was surnamed Amphiguëeis, or the

Halt. The Homeric gods were men divinized with imperishable frames, glorious and immortal sensualists, never visited by qualms of conscience, by headache, or remorse, or debility, or wrinkles, or dyspepsia, however deep their potations, however fiercely they indulged their appetites. Zeus, the Grand Seignior or Sultan of Olympus and father of gods and men, surpassed Turk and Mormon Elder in his uxoriousness and indiscriminate concubinage. With Olympian goddess and lone terrestrial nymph and deep-bosomed mortal lass of Hellas, the land of lovely women, as Homer calls it, did he pursue his countless intrigues, which he sometimes had the unblushing coolness and impudence to rehearse to his wedded wife, Herè. His *list* would have thrown Don Giovanni's entirely into the shade. Herè, the queen of Olympus, called the Golden-Throned, the Venerable, the Ox-Eyed, was a sort of celestial Queen Bess, the undaunted she-Tudor, whose father, bluff Harry, was not a bad human copy of Zeus himself, the Rejoicer in Thunder.

In that old Homeric heaven,—in those quiet seats of the gods of the heroic world, which were never shaken by storm-wind, nor lashed by the tempest that raved far below round the dwellings of wretched mortals,—in those quiet abodes above the thunder, there was for the most part nought but festal joy, music, choral dances, and emptying of nectar-cups, interrupted now and then by descents into the low-lying region of human life in quest of adventure, or on errands of divine intervention in the affairs of men, for whom, on the whole, Zeus and his

court entertained sentiments of profound contempt. Once in a while Zeus and all his courtiers went on a festal excursion to the land of the blameless Ethiops, which lay somewhere over the ocean, where they banqueted twelve days. Why such a special honor as this was shown to these Ethiops is not explained. Within their borders were evidently the summer resorts, Newport and Baden-Baden, frequented by the Olympians. Only in great crises was the whole mythic host of the Grecian religion summoned to meet in full forum on the heights of the immemorial mountain. At such times, all the fountains, rivers, and groves of Hellas were emptied of their guardian daemons, male and female, who hastened to pay their homage to and receive their orders from the Cloud-Gatherer, sitting on his throne, in his great skyey Capitolium, and invested with all the pomp of mythic majesty, his ambrosial locks smoothly combed and brushed by some Olympian *friseur*, his eagle perched with ruffled plumes upon his fist, and everything else so arranged as most forcibly to impress the country visitors and rural incumbents with salutary awe for the occupant of their sky-Vatican. Whether these last were compelled to salute the Jovine great toe with a kiss is not recorded, there being no account extant of the ceremonial and etiquette of Olympus. Whatever it was, doubtless it was rigidly enforced; for the Thunderer, it would seem, had a Bastile, or lock-up, with iron doors and a brazen threshold specially provided for contumacious and disobedient gods.

Zeus, although he could claim supreme dominion under the

law of primogeniture, was originally only a coequal ruler with his two brothers, Hades, king of the underworld, and Ennosigaeus, monarch of the salt sea-foam. They were alike the sons and coequal heirs of Kronos, or Time, and the Moerae, or Destinies, had parcelled out the universe in three equal parts between them. But the position of Zeus in his serene air-realm gave him the advantage over his two brothers,—as the metropolitan situation of the Roman see in the capital of the world gave its diocesan, who was originally nothing more than the peer of the Bishops of Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, and Constantinople, an opportunity finally to assert and maintain a spiritual lordship. This is a case exactly in point. It is certainly proper to illustrate a theocratic usurpation by an hierarchic one. Zeus, with his eagle and thunder and that earthquaking nod, was too strong for him of the trident and him of the three-headed hound. The whole mythic host regarded Jove's court as a place of final resort, of ultimate appeal. He was recognized as the Supreme Father, Papa, or Pope, of the Greek mythic realm. The nod of his immortal head was decisive. His azure eyebrows and ambrosial hair were full of fate.

The wars of mortals in Hellas and Dardanland were matters of more interest to the Olympian celestials than any other mere human transactions. These occasioned partisanships, heartburnings, and factions in the otherwise serene Olympian palaces. Even Father Zeus himself acknowledged a bias for sacred Ilium and its king and people over all the cities of

terrestrial men beneath the sun and starry heaven. In the ten-years' war at Troy, the Olympians were active partisans upon both sides at times, now screening their favorites from danger, and now even pitting themselves against combatants of more vulnerable flesh and blood. But in the matter of vulnerability they seem not to have enjoyed complete exemption, any more than did Milton's angels. Although they ate not bread nor drank wine, still there was in their veins a kind of ambrosial blood called *ichor*, which the prick of a javelin or spear would cause to flow freely. Even Ares, the genius of homicide and slaughter, was on one occasion at least wounded by a mortal antagonist, and sent out of the melee badly punished, so that he bellowed like a bull-calf, as he mounted on a dusty whirlwind to Olympus. Over his misadventures while playing his own favorite game certainly there were no tears to be shed; but when, prompted by motherly tenderness, Aphrodite, the soft power of love,—she of the Paphian boudoir, whose recesses were glowing with the breath of Sabaean frankincense fumed by a hundred altars,—she at whose approach the winds became hushed, and the clouds fled, and the daedal earth poured forth sweet flowers,—when such a presence manifested herself on the field of human strife on an errand of motherly affection, and attempted to screen her bleeding son from the shafts of his foes with a fold of her shining *peplum*, surely the audacious Grecian king should have forborne, and, lowering his lance, should have turned his wrath elsewhere. But no,—he pierced her skin with his spear, so that,

shrieking, she abandoned her child, and was driven, bleeding, to her immortal homestead. The rash earth-born warrior knew not that he who put his lance in rest against the immortals had but a short lease of life to live, and that his bairns would never run to lisp their sire's return, nor climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Homer, in the first books of his "Ilias," permits us to glance into the banqueting-hall of Olympus. The two regular pourers of nectar, to wit, Hebe and Ganymede, are off duty. Hephaestus the Cripple has taken their place; and as he halts about from guest to guest, inextinguishable laughter arises among the gods at his awkward method of "passing the rosy." His lameness was owing to that sunset fall on the isle of Lemnos from the threshold of heaven. So, all day long, says the poet, they revelled, Apollo and the Muses performing the part of a ballet-troop. It is pleasing to learn that the Olympians kept early hours, conforming, in this respect, to the rule of Poor Richard. Duly at set of sun they betook themselves to their couches. Zeus himself slept, and by his side Herè of the Golden Throne.

Who would wish to have lived a pagan under that old Olympian dispensation, even though, like the dark-eyed Greek of the Atreidean age, his fancy could have "fetched from the blazing chariot of the Sun a beardless youth who touched a golden lyre and filled the illumined groves with ravishment"? —even though, like him, he might in myrtle-grove and lonely mountain-glen have had favors granted him even by Idalian

Aphrodite the Beautiful, and felt her warm breath glowing upon his forehead, or been counselled by the blue-eyed Athene, or been elevated to ample rule by Herè herself, Heaven's queen? That Greek heaven was heartless, libidinous, and cold. It had no mild divinities appointed to bind up the broken heart and assuage the grief of the mourner. The weary and the heavy-laden had no celestial resource amongst its immortal revellers and libertines, male and female. There was no sympathy for mortal suffering amongst those divine sensualists. They talked with contempt and unsympathizing ridicule of the woes of the earthborn, of the brevity of mortal life, and of its miseries. A boon, indeed, and a grateful exchange, was the Mother Mild of the Roman Catholic Pantheon, the patroness of the broken-hearted, who inclines her countenance graciously to the petitions of womanly anguish, for the voluptuous Aphrodite, the haughty Juno, the Di-Vernonish Artemis, and the lewd and wanton nymphs of forest, mountain, ocean, lake, and river. Ceres alone, of the old female classic daemons, seemed to be endowed with a truly womanly tenderness and regard for humankind. She, like the Mater Dolorosa, is represented in the myths to have known bereavement and sorrow, and she, therefore, could sympathize with the grief of mothers sprung from Pyrrha's stem. Nay, she had envied them their mortality, which enabled them to join their lost ones, who could not come back to them, in the grave. Vainly she sought to descend into the dark underworld to see her "young Persephone, transcendent queen of shades." Not for her

weary, wandering feet was a single one of the thousand paths that lead downward to death. Her only consolation was in the vernal flowers, which, springing from the dark earthly mould, seemed to her to be

> "heralds from the dreary deep, Soft voices from the solemn streams,"

by whose shores, veiled in eternal twilight, wandered her sad child, the queen of the realm of Dis, with its nine-fold river, gates of adamant, and minarets of fire. The heartlessness of all the ethnic deities, of whatever age or nation, is a noticeable feature, especially when contrasted with the unfathomable pity of their Exterminator, who wept over the chief city of his fatherland, and would have gathered it, as a hen gathereth her chickens, under the wings of his love, though its sons were seeking to compass his destruction. Those old ethnic deities were cruel, inexorable, and relentless. They knew nothing of mercy and forgiveness. They ministered no balm to human sorrow. The daemons who wandered in human shape over the classic lands of old were all fickle and malevolent. They oftentimes impelled their victims to suicide. The ghouls that haunt the tombs and waste places of the regions where they were once worshipped are their lineal descendants and modern representatives. The vampires and pest-hags of the Levant are their successors in malignity. The fair humanities of the old religion were fair only in shape and exterior. The old pagan gods were friendly only to kings, heroes, and grandees; they had no beatitude for the poor

and lowly. Human despair, under their dispensation, knew no alleviation but a plunge from light and life into the underworld, —rather than be monarch of which, the shade of Achilles avers, in the "Odusseia," that it would prefer to be the hireling and drudge of some poor earthly peasant. Elysium was only for a privileged few.

It has been said that the old ethnic creeds were the true religion "growing wild,"—that the human soil was prepared by such kind of spiritual crops and outgrowths, with their tares and weeds intermingled with wheat, for the seed that was finally to be sown by the Divine Sower,—that, erroneous as they were in a thousand respects, they were genuine emanations of the religious nature in man, and as such not to be stigmatized or harshly characterized,—that without them the human soil could not have been made ready for the crop of unmixed truth. This may be true of some of them, though surely not of the popular form of the old Greek ethnic faith. Its deities were nothing better than the passions of human nature projected upon ethereal heights, and incarnated and made personal in undecaying demonic shapes, —not conditioned and straitened like the bodies of man, but enjoying perpetual youth and immunity from death in most cases, with permission to take liberties with Space and Time greater even than are granted to us by steam and telegraph-wires.

The vulgar Grecian polytheism was all material. It had no martyrs and confessors. It was not worth dying for, as it was good for nothing to live by. The religion of Hellas was the religion of

sensualistic beauty simply. It was just the worship for Pheidias and Praxiteles, for the bard of Teos and the soft Catullus, for sensual poet, painter, and sculptor. But "the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle," although we gather most of our knowledge of Olympus and the Olympians from his verse, was worthy of a loftier and purer heaven than the low one under which he wandered from city to city, singing the tale of Troy divine, and hymns and paeans to the gods. The good and the true were mere metaphysical abstractions to the old Greek. What must he have been when it would not have been safe for him to leave his wife alone with the best and highest of his gods? The ancient Hellenes were morally most vicious and depraved, even when compared with contemporary heathen nations. The old Greek was large in brain, but not in heart. He had created his gods in his own image, and they were—what they were. There was no goodness in his religion, and we can tolerate it only as it is developed in the Homeric rhapsodies, in the far-off fable-time of the old world, and amongst men who were but partially self-conscious. In that remote Homeric epoch it is tolerable, when cattle-stealing and war were the chief employments of the ruling caste,—and we may add, woman-stealing, into the bargain. "I did not come to fight against the Trojans," says Achilles, "because I had suffered any grievance at their hands. They never drove off my oxen and horses or stole my harvests in rich-soiled Phthia, the nurse of heroes; for vale-darkening mountains and a tumultuous sea separate us."

Into that old Homeric world we enter through the portals of the "Ilias" and "Odusseia," and see the peaks of Olympus shining afar off in white splendor like silvery clouds, not looking for or expecting either a loftier or a purer heaven. Somewhere on the bounds of the dim ocean-world we know that there is an exiled court, a faded sort of St. Germain celestial dynasty, geologic gods, coevals of the old Silurian strata,—to wit, Kronos, Rhea, Nox, *et al.* Here these old, unsceptred, discrowned, and sky-fallen potentates "cogitate in their watery ooze," and in "the shady sadness of vales,"—sometimes visited by their successors for counsel or concealment, or for the purpose of establishing harmony amongst them. The Sleep and Death of the Homeric mythology were naturally gentle divinities,—sometimes lifting the slain warrior from the field of his fame, and bearing him softly through the air to his home and weeping kindred. This was a gracious office. The saintly legends of the Roman Church have borrowed a hint from this old Homeric fancy. One pleasant feature of the Homeric battles is, that, when some blameless, great-souled champion falls, the blind old bard interrupts the performances for a moment and takes his reader with him away from the din and shouting of the battle, following, as it were, the spirit of the fallen hero to his distant abode, where sit his old father, his spouse, and children,—thus throwing across the cloud of battle a sweet gleam of domestic, pastoral life, to relieve its gloom. Homer, both in the "Ilias" and "Odusseia," gives his readers frequent glimpses into the halls of Olympus;

for messengers are continually flashing to and fro, like meteors, between the throne of Zeus and the earth. Sometimes it is Hermes sandalled with down; sometimes it is wind-footed Iris, who is winged with the emerald plumes of the rainbow; and sometimes it is Oneiros, or a Dream, that glides down to earth, hooded and veiled, through the shadow of night, bearing the behests of Jove. But however often we are permitted to return to the ambrosial homestead of the ever-living gods in the wake of returning messengers, we always find it the same calm region, lifted far up above the turbulence, the perturbations, the clouds and storms of

> "That low spot which men call earth,"

—a glorious aërial Sans-Souci and house of pleasaunce.

It is curious that the atheistic Lucretius has given us a most glowing description of the Olympian mansions; but perhaps the Olympus of the Epicurean poet and philosopher is somewhat higher up and more sublimated and etherealized than the Olympus of Homer and of the popular faith. In a flash of poetic inspiration, he says, "The walls of the universe are cloven. I see through the void inane. The splendor (*numen*) of the gods appears, and the quiet seats which are not shaken by storm-winds nor aspersed by rain-clouds; nor does the whitely falling snow-flake, with its hoar rime, violate *their summery warmth*, but an ever-cloudless ether laughs above them with widespread

radiance." Lucretius had all these lineaments of his Epicurean heaven from old Homer. They are scattered up and down the "Ilias" and "Odusseia" in the shape of *disjecta membra*. For instance, the Olympus which he beholds through a chasm in the walls of the universe, towering into the pure empyrean, has some of the features of Homer's island Elysiums, the blissful abodes of mortal heroes who have been divinized or translated. The Celtic island-valley of Avalon, the abode of King Arthur, "with its orchard-lawns and bowery hollows," so exquisitely alluded to by Tennyson, is a kindred spot with the Homeric Elysian plain. Emerson says, "The race of gods, or those we erring own, are shadows floating up and down in the still abodes." This is exactly the meaning of Lucretius also. They are all air-cities, these seats of the celestials, whatever be the creed,—summery, ethereal climes, fanned with spice-winds and zephyrs. Meru, Kaf, Olympus, Elboorz,—they are all alike. The ethnic superior daemons were well termed the powers of the air. Upward into the far blue gazes the weary and longing saint and devotee of every faith. Beyond the azure curtains of the sky, upward into the pure realm, over the rain-cloud and the thunder and the silver bars of the scirrhus, he places his quiet seats, his mansions of rest.

The German poet, Schiller, who was a worshipper of Art and sensualistic beauty, and who regarded the sciences as the mere handmaids of Art, exalting the aesthetic above the moral nature in man, quite naturally regretted that he had not lived in the palmy days of the anthropomorphic creed of Hellas, before the

dirge of Pan was chanted in the Isle of Naxos. His "Gods of Greek Land" is as fine a piece of heathenish longing as could well be written at so late a day. His heart was evidently far away from the century in which he lived, and pulsated under that distant Grecian sky of which he somewhere speaks. For artistic purposes the myths of Greece formed a glorious faith. Grace and symmetry of form were theirs, and they satiated the eye with outward loveliness; but to the deep fountains of feeling and sentiment, such as a higher faith has unsealed in the heart, they never penetrated. What a poor, narrow little world was that myth-haunted one of the Grecian poet and sculptor, and even philosopher, compared with the actual world which modern science is revealing from year to year! What a puny affair was that Grecian sun, with its coachman's apparatus of reins, fire-breathing nags, and golden car, which Schiller looks back to, in the spirit of Mr. Weller, Senior, when compared with the vast empyreal sphere and light-fountain of modern science, with its retinue of planets, ships of space, freighted with souls! Science the handmaid of Art! Well might the mere artist and worshipper of anthropomorphic beauty shrink appalled, and sigh for a lodge under some low Grecian heaven and in the bosom of some old myth-peopled Nature, as he trembled before the apocalypses of modern sidereal science, which has dropped its plummet to unimaginable depths through the nebulous abysses of space, shoaled with systems of worlds as the sea is with its finny droves. The Nature and the Physical Universe of the old

ethnic Greek formed only a little niche and recess, on the walls of which the puny human image was easily reflected in beautiful and picturesque and grotesque shadows, which were mistaken for gods. But the Nature and Universe revealed by modern Christian science are too vast and profound to mirror anything short of the image of the Omnipotent himself.

Still there is a period in the life of every imaginative youth, when he is a pagan and worships in the old Homeric pantheon, —where self-denial and penance were unknown, and where in grove and glen favored mortal lover might hear the tread of "Aphrodite's glowing sandal." The youthful poet may exclaim with Schiller,—

"Art thou, fair world, no more?
Return, thou virgin-bloom on Nature's face!
Ah, only on the minstrel's magic shore
Can we the footstep of sweet Fable trace!
The meadows mourn for the old hallowing life;
Vainly we search the earth of gods bereft;
Where once the warm and living shapes were rife,
Shadows alone are left!
Cold, from the North, has gone
Over the flowers the blast that chilled their May;
And, to enrich the worship of the One,
A universe of gods must pass away!
Mourning, I search on yonder starry steeps,
But thee, no more, Selene, there I see!
And through the woods I call, and o'er the deeps,

And—Echo answers me." [Bulwer's Translation.]

The Elysian beauty and melancholy grace which Wordsworth throws over the shade of Alcestis were gleams borrowed from a better world than the mythic Elysium. Neither Olympus nor Erebus disdained the pleasures of sense.

Shakspeare, in his "Midsummer-Night's Dream," has mingled the mythologies of Hellas and Scandinavia, of the North and the South, making of them a sort of mythic *olla podrida*. He represents the tiny elves and fays of the Gothic fairyland, span-long creatures of dew and moonshine, the lieges of King Oberon, and of Titania, his queen, as making an irruption from their haunted hillocks, woods, meres, meadows, and fountains, in the North, into the olive-groves of Ilissus, and dancing their ringlets in the ray of the Grecian Selene, the chaste, cold huntress, and running by the triple Hecate's team, following the shadow of Night round the earth. Strangely must have sounded the horns of the Northern Elfland, "faintly blowing" in the woods of Hellas, as Oberon and his grotesque court glanced along, "with bit and bridle ringing," to bless the nuptials of Theseus with the bouncing Amazon. Strangely must have looked the elfin footprints in the Attic green. Across this Shakspearean plank, laid between Olympus and Asgard, or more strictly Alfheim, we gladly pass from the sunny realm of Zeus into that of his Northern counterpart, Odin, who ought to be dearer and more familiar to his descendants than the Grecian Jove, though

he is not. The forms which throng Asgard may not be so sculpturesquely beautiful, so definite, and fit to be copied in marble and bronze as those of Olympus. There may be more vagueness of outline in the Scandinavian abode of the gods, as of far-off blue skyey shapes, but it is more cheerful and homelike. Pleasantly wave the evergreen boughs of the Life-Tree, Yggdrasil, the mythic ash-tree of the old North, whose leaves are green with an unwithering bloom that shall defy even the fires of the final conflagration. Iduna, or Spring, sits in those boughs with her apples of rejuvenescence, restoring the wasted strength of the gods. In the shade of its topmost branches stands Asgard, the abode of the Asen, who are called the Rafters of the World,—to wit, Odin, Thor, Freir, and the other higher powers, male and female, of the old Teutonic religion. In Asgard is Valhalla, the hall of elect heroes. The roots of this mundane ash reach as far downwards as its branches do upwards. Its roots, trunk, and branches together thrid the universe, shooting Hela, the kingdom of death, Midgard, the abode of men, and Asgard, the dwelling of the gods, like so many concentric rings.

This ash was a psychological and ontological plant. All the lore of Plato and Kant and Fichte and Cousin was audible in the sigh of its branches. Three Norns, Urt, Urgand, and Skuld, dwelt beneath it, so that it comprehended time past, present, and future. The gods held their councils beneath it. By one of its stems murmured the Fountain of Mimir, in Niflheim or Mistland, from whose urn welled up the ocean and the rivers of the earth. Odin

had his outlook in its top, where kept watch and ward the All-seeing Eye. In its boughs frisked and gambolled a squirrel called *Busybody*, which carried gossip from bough to root and back. The warm Urdar Fountain of the South, in which swam the sun and moon in the shape of two swans, flowed by its celestial stem in Asgard. A tree so much extended as this ash of course had its parasites and *rodentia* clinging to it and gnawing it; but the brave old ash defied them all, and is to wave its skywide umbrage even over the ruins of the universe, after the *dies irae* shall have passed. So sings the Voluspa. This tree is a worthy type of the Teutonic race, so green, so vigorous, so all-embracing. We should expect to find the chief object in the Northern myth-world a tree. The forest was ever dear to the sons of the North, and many ancient Northern tribes used to hold their councils and parliaments under the branches of some wide-spreading oak or ash. Like its type, Yggdrasil, the Teutonic race seems to be threading the earth with the roots of universal dominion, and, true to hereditary instincts, it is belting the globe with its colonies, planting it, as it were, with slips from the great Mundane Ash, and throwing Bifröst bridges across oceans, in the shape of telegraph-cables and steamships.

Asgard is a more homelike place than Olympus. Home and fireside, in their true sense, are Teutonic institutions. Valhalla, the hall of elect heroes, was appropriately shingled with golden shields. Guzzlers of ale and drinkers of *lagerbier* will be pleased to learn that this Northern Valhalla was a sort of celestial beer-saloon, thus showing that it was a genuine Teutonic paradise;

for ale would surely be found in such a region. In the "Prose Edda," Hor replies to Gangler—who is asking him about the board and lodgings of the heroes who had gone to Odin in Valhalla, and whether they had anything but water to drink—in huge disdain, inquiring of Gangler whether he supposed that the Allfather would invite kings and jarls and other great men, and give them nothing to drink but water. How do things divine and supernatural, when conceived of by man and cast in an earthly, finite mould, necessarily assume human attributes and characteristics! Strong drinks, the passion of the Northern races in all ages, are of course found in their old mythic heaven, in their fabled Hereafter,—and even boar's flesh also. The ancient Teuton could not have endured a heaven with mere airy, unsubstantial joys. There must be celestial roasts of strong meat for him, and flagons of his ancestral ale. His descendants to this day never celebrate a great occasion without a huge feed and corporation dinners, thus establishing their legitimate descent from Teutonic stock. The Teutonic man ever led a life of vigorous action; hence his keen appetite, whetted by the cold blasts of his native North. What wonder, then, at the presence of sodden boar's flesh in his ancient Elysium, and of a celestial goat whose teats yielded a strong beverage? The Teuton liked not fasting and humiliation either in Midgard or Asgard. He was ever carnivorous and eupeptic. We New Englanders are perhaps the leanest of his descendants, because we have forsaken too much the old ways and habits of the race, and given ourselves

too much to abstractions and transcendentalism. The old Teuton abhorred the abstract. He loved the concrete, the substantial. The races of Southern Europe, what are now called the Latin races, were more temperate than the Teutonic, but they were far less brave, honest, and manly. Their sensuality might not be so boisterous, but it was more bestial and foul. Strength and manliness, and a blithe, cheery spirit, were ever the badges of the Teuton. But though originally gross and rough, he was capable of a smoother polish, of a glossier enamel, than a more superficial, trivial nature. He was ever deeply thoughtful, and capable of profounder moods of meditation than the lightly-moved children of the South. Sighs, as from the boughs of Yggdrasil, ever breathed through his poetry from of old. He was a smith, an artificer, and a delver in mines from the beginning. The old Teutonic Pan was far more musical and awe-inspiring than his Grecian counterpart The Noon-spirit of the North was more wild than that of the South. How all the ancient North was alive in its Troll-haunted hillocks, where clanged the anvil of the faery hill-smith, and danced and banqueted the Gnome and Troll,—and in its streams and springs, musical with the harps of moist-haired Elle-women and mermaids, who, ethnic daemons though they were, yet cherished a hope of salvation! The myth-spirits of the North were more homely and domestic than those of the South, and had a broader humor and livelier fancies. The Northern Elf-folk were true natives of the soil, grotesque in costume and shape.

The Teuton of to-day is the lineal descendant of the old

worshipper of Thor. Miöllnir, the hammer of Thor, still survives in the gigantic mechanisms of Watt, Fulton, and Stephenson. Thor embodied more Teutonic attributes than Odin. The feats which Thor performed in that strange city of Utgard, as they are related in the old "Prose Edda," were prophetic of the future achievements of the race, of which he was a chief god. Thor once went on a journey to Jötunheim, or Giant-land,—a primitive outlying country, full of the enemies of the Asgard dynasty, or cosmical deities. In the course of the journey, he lodged one night with his two companions in what he supposed to be a huge hall, but which turned out to be the glove of a giant named Skrymir, who was asleep and snoring as loud as an earthquake, near by. When the giant awoke, he said to Thor, who stood near,—"My name is Skrymir, but I need not ask thy name, for I know that thou art the god Thor. But what hast thou done with my glove?" Sure enough, on looking, Thor found that he had put up that night in Skrymir's handshoe, or glove. The giant and Thor breakfasted amicably together and went on their way till night, when Skrymir gave up his wallet of provisions to Thor and his two companions, and bade them supply themselves,—he meanwhile composing himself to sleep, snoring so loudly that the forest trembled. Thor could not undo the giant's wallet, and in his wrath he smote the somnolent lubber with his mallet, a crushing blow. Skrymir simply awoke, and inquired whether a leaf had not fallen upon his head from the oak-tree under which he was lying. Conceive the chagrin and shame of Thor at this question! A second time

Thor let fly at the giant with his mallet. This time it sank into his skull up to the handle, but with no more satisfactory result. The giant merely inquired whether an acorn had not dropped on his head, and wanted to know how Thor found himself, whether he slept well or not; to which queries Thor muttered an answer, and went away, determined to make a third and final effort with his mallet, which had never failed him until then. About daybreak, as Skrymir was taking his last snooze, Thor uplifted his hammer, clutching it so fiercely that his knuckles became white. Down it came, with terrific emphasis, crushing through Skrymir's cheek, up to the handle. Skrymir sat up and inquired if there were not birds perched on the tree under which he had been lodging; he thought he felt something dropping on his head, —some moss belike. Alas for Thor and his weapon! For once he found himself worsted, and his mightiest efforts regarded as mere flea-bites; for Skrymir's talk about leaves and acorns and moss was merely a sly piece of humor, levelled at poor crestfallen Thor, as he afterwards acknowledged. After this incident, Thor and his two companions, the peasant's children, Thjalfi and Röska, and Skrymir went their ways, and came to the high-gated city of Utgard, which stood in the middle of a plain, and was so lofty that Thor had to throw back his head to see its pinnacles and domes. Now Thor was by no means small; indeed, in Asgard, the city of the AEsir, he was regarded as a giant; but here in Utgard Skrymir told him he had better not give himself any airs, for the people of that city would not tolerate any assumption on the part

of such a mannikin!

Utgard-Loki, the king of the city, received Thor with the utmost disdain, calling him a stripling, and asked him contemptuously what he could do. Thor professed himself ready for a drinking-match. Whereupon Utgard-Loki bade his cup-bearer bring the large horn which his courtiers had to drain at a single draught, when they had broken any of the established rules and regulations of his palace. Thor was thirsty, and thought he could manage the horn without difficulty, although it was somewhat of the largest. After a long, deep, and breathless pull which he designed as a finisher, he set the horn down and found that the liquor was not perceptibly lowered. Again he tried, with no better result; and a third time, full of wrath and chagrin, he guzzled at its contents, but found that the liquor still foamed near to the brim. He gave back the horn in disgust. Then Utgard-Loki proposed to him the childish exercise of lifting his cat. Thor put his hands under Tabby's belly, and, lifting with all his might, could only raise one foot from the floor. He was a very Gulliver in Brobdignag. As a last resort, he proposed to retrieve his tarnished reputation by wrestling with some Utgardian; whereupon the king turned into the ring his old nurse, Elli, a poor toothless crone, who brought Thor to his knees, and would have thrown him, had not the king interfered. Poor Thor! The next morning he took breakfast in a sad state of mind, and owned himself a shamefully used-up individual. The fact was, he had strayed unconsciously amongst the old brute powers of primitive Nature,

as he ought to have perceived by the size of the kids they wore. He had done better than he was aware of, however. The three blows of his hammer had fallen on nothing less than a huge mountain, instead of a giant, and left three deep glens dinted into its surface; the drinking-horn, which he had undertaken to empty, was the sea itself, or an outlet of the sea, which he had perceptibly lowered; while the cat was in reality the Midgard Serpent, which enringed the world in its coils, and the toothless she-wrestler was Old Age! What wonder that Thor was brought to his knees? On finding himself thus made game of, Thor grew wroth, but had to go his ways, as the city of Utgard had vanished into thin air, with its cloud-capped towers and enormous citizens. Thor afterwards undertook to catch the Midgard Serpent, using a bull's head for bait. The World-Snake took the delicious morsel greedily, and, finding itself hooked, writhed and struggled so that Thor thrust his feet through the bottom of his boat, in his endeavors to land his prey.

There is a certain grotesque humor in Thor's adventures, which is missed in his mythologic counterpart of the South, Hercules. It is the old rich "world-humor" of the North, genial and broad, which still lives in the creations of the later Teutonic Muse. The dints which Thor made on the mountain-skull of Skrymir were types and forerunners of the later feats of the Teutonic race, performed on the rough, shaggy, wilderness face of this Western hemisphere, channelling it with watery highways, tunnelling and levelling its mountains, and strewing its surface

with cities. The old Eddas and Voluspas of the North are full of significant lore for the sons of the Northmen, wherever their lot is cast. There they will find, that, in colonizing and humanizing the face of the world, in zoning it with railroads and telegraph-wires, in bridging its oceans with clipper-ships, and steamboats, and in weaving, forging, and fabricating for it amid the clang of iron mechanisms, they are only following out the original bent of the race, and travelling in the wake of Thor the Hammerer.

While the Grecian and Roman myths are made familiar by our school-books, it is to be regretted that the wild and glorious mythic lore of our ancient kindred is neglected. To that you must go, if you would learn whence came

> "the German's inward sight,
> And slow-sure Britain's secular might,"

and it may be added, the Anglo-American's unsurpassed practical energy, skill, and invincible love of freedom. From the fountains of the ash-tree Yggdrasil flowed these things. Some of the greatest of modern Teutonic writers have gone back to these fountains, flowing in these wild mythic wastes of the Past, and have drunk inspiration thence. Percy, Scott, and Carlyle, by so doing, have infused new sap from the old life-tree of their race into our modern English literature, which had grown effete and stale from having had its veins injected with too much cold, thin, watery Gallic fluid. Yes, Walter Scott heard the innumerous leafy

sigh of Yggdrasil's branches, and modulated his harp thereby. Carlyle, too, has bathed in the three mystic fountains which flow fast by its roots. In an especial manner has the German branch of the Teuton kindred turned back to those old musical well-springs bubbling up in the dim North, and they have been strengthened and inspired by the pilgrimage. "Under the root, which stretches out towards the Jötuns, there is Mimir's Well, in which Wisdom and Wit lie hidden." Longfellow, too, has drunk of Mimir's Well, and hence the rare charm and witchery of his "Evangeline," "Hiawatha," and "Golden Legend." This well in the North is better than Castalian fount for the children of the North.

How much more genial and lovable is Balder, the Northern Sun-god, than his Grecian counterpart, the lord of the unerring bow, the Southern genius of light, and poesy, and music! Balder dwelt in his palace of Breidablick, or Broadview; and in the magical spring-time of the North, when the fair maiden Iduna breathed into the blue air her genial breath, he set imprisoned Nature free, and filled the sky with silvery haze, and called home the stork and crane, summoning forth the tender buds, and clothing the bare branches with delicate green. "Balder is the mildest, the wisest, and the most eloquent of all the AEsir," says the "Edda." A voice of wail went through the palaces of Asgard when Balder was slain by the mistletoe dart. Hermod rode down to the kingdom of Hela, or Death, to ransom the lost one. Meantime his body was set adrift on a floating funeral pyre. Hermod would have succeeded in his mission, had not Lok, the

Spirit of Evil, interposed to thwart him. For this, Lok was bound in prison, with cords made of the twisted intestines of one of his own sons; and he will remain imprisoned until the Twilight of the Gods, the consummation of all things.

On the shoulders of Odin, the supreme Scandinavian deity, sat two ravens, whispering in his ears. These two ravens are called Hugin and Munin, or Thought and Memory. These "stately ravens of the saintly days of yore" flew, each day, all over the world, gathering "facts and figures," doubtless for their August master. It is a beautiful fable, and reminds one of Milton's "thoughts which wander through eternity." The dove of the Ark, and the bird which perched on the shoulder of the old Plutarchan hero Sertorius, are recalled by this Scandinavian legend:—

> "Hugin and Munin
> Each down take their flight
> Earth's fields over."

Nobler birds, these dark ravens of the Northern Jove, than the bolt-bearing eagle of his Grecian brother. So much deeper, more significant, and musical are the myths of the stern, dark, and tender North than those of the bright and fickle South!

Notwithstanding that Valhalla was full of invincible heroes, and that the celestial city of Asgard was the abode of the chief gods, still it had a watchman who dwelt in a tower at the end of the Bridge Bifröst. Heimdall was his name, and he was endowed with the sharpest ear and eye that ever warder possessed. He

could hear grass and wool grow with the utmost distinctness. The AEsir, notwithstanding their supreme position, had need of such a warder, with his Gjallar-horn, mightier than the Paladin Astolfo's, that could make the universe reëcho to its blast. The truth was, over even the high gods of Asgard hung a Doom which was mightier than they. It was necessary for them to keep watch and ward, therefore, for evil things were on their trail. There were vast, mysterious, outlying regions beyond their sway: Niflheim or Mistland, Muspellheim or Flameland, and Jötunheim, the abode of the old earth-powers, matched with whom, even Thor, the strongest of the Asen, was but a puny stripling. Over this old Scandinavian heaven, as over all ethnic celestial abodes, the dark Destinies lorded it with unquestioned sway. From the four corners of the world, at last, were to fly the snow-flakes of the dread Fimbul, Winter, blotting the sun, and moaning and drifting night and day. Three times was Winter to come and go, bringing to men and gods "a storm-age, a wolf-age." Then cometh Ragnarök, the Twilight of the Gods! Odin mounts his war-steed. The vast ash Yggdrasil begins to shiver through all its height. The beatified heroes of Valhalla, who have ever been on the watch for this dread era, issue forth full of the old dauntless spirit of the North to meet the dread agents of darkness and doom. Garm, the Moonhound, breaks loose, and bays. "High bloweth Heimdall his horn aloft. Odin counselleth Mimir's head." The battle joins. In short, the fiery baptism prophesied in the dark scrolls of Stoic sage and Hebrew

and Scandinavian scald alike wraps the universe. The dwarfs wail in their mountain-clefts. All is uproar and hissing conflagration.

"Dimmed's now the sun;
In ocean earth sinks;
From the skies are cast
The sparkling stars;
Fire-reek rageth
Around Time's nurse,
And flickering flames
With heaven itself shall play."

By "Time's nurse," in the foregoing lines from the "Voluspa," is meant the Mundane Tree Yggdrasil, which shall survive unscathed, and wave mournfully over the universal wreck. But in the "Edda" Hor tells Gangler that "another earth shall appear, most lovely and verdant, with pleasant fields, where the grain shall grow unsown. Vidar and Vali shall survive. They shall dwell on the Plain of Ida, where Asgard formerly stood. Thither shall come the sons of Thor, bringing with them their father's mallet. Baldur and Hödur shall also repair thither from the abode of Death. There shall they sit and converse together, and call to mind their former knowledge and the perils they underwent."

Perhaps we might give the Eddaic Twilight of the Gods a more human and strictly European interpretation. May it not also foreshadow the great Armageddon struggle which is evidently impending between the Teutonic races in Western Europe, with

their Protestantism, free speech, individual liberty, right of private judgment, and scorn of all thraldom, both material and mental, on the one side, and the dark powers of absolutism, repression, and irresponsible authority in church and state, on the other? How Russia, the type of brute-force, presses with crushing weight on intellectual Germany! Soon she will absorb the old kingdoms of Scandinavia,—to wit, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. On the shores of Norway the ruler of the Sclavonic race will hang over Scotland and England, like a bird of prey about to swoop upon his victim. All despots and absolutists will array themselves under his banner or be his auxiliaries. The old hierarchies will be banded with him to crush out Protestantism, which is a plant of Teutonic growth. Old Asia, with her rancor and despotic traditions, recognizes in the Russian imperial rule a congenial rallying-point against the progressive and hated Anglo-Saxonism and Protestantism of the West. A decisive struggle is surely impending between freedom and absolutism, between the bigoted adherents of the old faiths and the nations that have cut loose from them. Perhaps this struggle may be prefigured in the old Northern myth of the Twilight of the Gods.

All the old mythic cosmogonies are strangely suggestive and full of mystic import,—that of Northern Odinism more than any other. In that dim Niflheim, for instance, with its well-springs of the waters of the upper world confusedly bubbling, and its metallic ore-veins, and dusk, vaporous atmosphere, whence issued the old Nibelungen heroes of the great Teutonic epos,

there is much that is suggestive. May not one discover in this old cosmogonic myth a dim hint of the nebular hypothesis of creation, as it is called? Certainly, Niflheim, the Mistland, and Muspellheim, the Flameland, commingled together, would produce that hot, seething, nebulous fire-mist, out of which, the physicists say, was evolved, by agglomeration and centrifugal and centripetal attraction, our fair, harmonious system of worlds bounded by outermost Neptune, thus far the Ultima Thule of the solar system. Perhaps Asgard, translated from mythic into scientific language, means the Zodiacal Light, and the Bridge Bifröst, the Milky Way.

How curious, to trace in the grotesque mythic cosmogonies of India, Greece, and Scandinavia, modern geology, botany, chemistry, etc.,—the vast and brutal giants of the Eddas and other old mythic scriptures being recognized as impersonations of the forces of Nature! The old mythic cosmogonists and the modern geologists and astronomers do not differ amongst themselves so much, after all. The mythic physicists had personal agents at work, in place of our simple elemental ones; the result is the same. Take the mythic cosmogonies of ancient Greece, Scandinavia, and India, and the geologies and astronomies of the present day, and compare their pages, changing things personal into things impersonal. The expulsion and banishment of the old shapeless mundane deities by a new and more beautiful race of gods, the cosmical divinities, the powers and rulers of an ordered world, are intelligible enough when translated into

our modern geological nomenclature. The leaves of the Stone Book, as the rocky layers of the earth have been called, and the blue hieroglyphic page of heaven, also, are more intelligibly read by the aid of the mythic glosses of old religion, of Saga, Rune, and Voluspa. They spell the telluric records aright in their own peculiar language. The assaults of the Typhons and Jötuns upon the celestial dynasty, and their attempts to scale the fiery citadels of the gods by making ladders of mountains, indicate clearly enough the different revolutions read by geology in the various strata and rocky layers piled upon the primitive granite of the globe, the bursting through of eruptions from the central fire, extruding and uplifting mountains, and the subsidence of the ocean from one ripple-marked sea-beach to another lower down. In those dim geologic epochs, where annals are written on Mica Slate, Clay Slate, and Silurian Systems, on Old Red Sandstones and New, on Primary and Secondary Rocks and Tertiary Chalk-beds, there were topsy-turvyings amongst the hills and gambollings and skippings of mountains, to which the piling of Pelion upon Ossa was a mere cobblestone feat. Alps and Apennines then played at leap-frog. Vast basaltic masses were oftentimes extruded into the astonished air from the very heart and core of the world. In truth, the old mythic cosmogonies of the ancient East, South, and North are not a whit too grotesque in their descriptions of the embryo earth, when it lay weltering in a sort of uterine film, assuming form and regular lineaments.

There is nothing more drear, monstrous, wild, dark, and

lonely in the descriptions of the mythologic than of the scientific page. What more wild and drear is there, even in Indian cosmogonic fable, than that strange carbonigenous era of the globe, whose deposits, in the shape of petrified forests, now keep us warm and cook our food, and whose relics and souvenirs are pressed between the stone leaves of the secondary rock for preservation by the Omnipotent Herbalist? Land and water were then distinguishable,—but as yet there was no terrestrial animal, nothing organic but radiata and molluscs, holly-footed and head-footed, and other aquatic monstrosities, mailed, plated, and buckler-headed, casting the shovel-nosed shark of the present Cosmos entirely into the shade, in point of horned, toothed, and serrated horrors. These amorphous creatures glided about in the seas, and vast sea-worms, or centipedal asps, the parents of modern krakens and sea-serpents, doubtless, accompanied them. There stood that unfinished world reeking with charcoal fumes, its soft, fungous, cryptogamic vegetation efflorescing with fierce luxuriance in that ghastly carbonic atmosphere. Rudimental palms and pines of mushroom growth stood there motionless, sending forth no soft and soul-like murmurs into the lurid reek; for as yet leaves and flowers and blue skies and pure breezes were not,—nothing but whiffs of mephitic and lethal vapor ascending, as from a vast charcoal brazier. No lark or linnet or redbreast or mocking-bird could live, much less warble, in those carbonic times. The world, like a Mississippi steamer, was coaling, with an eye to the needs of its future biped passengers. The embryotic

earth was then truly a Niflheim, or Mistland,—a dun, fuming region. Those were the days, perhaps, when Nox reigned, and the great mundane egg was hatching in the oven-like heat, from which the winged boy Eros leaped forth, "his back glittering with golden plumes, and swift as eddying air." We have it on good authority, that the Adirondack Mountains of New York, and the Grampian Hills of Scotland, where Norval was to feed his flocks, had already upheaved their bare backs from the boiling caldrons of the sea, thus stealing a march on the Alps and many other more famous mountains.

How opposite and remote from each other are the mythologic ages and the nineteenth century! The critical and scientific spirit of the one is in strange contrast with the credulous, blindly reverent spirit of the other. Mythology delegated the government of the world to inferior deities, the subjects of an omnipotent Fate or Necessity; while, to show how extremes meet, mere science delegates it to chemical and physiological agencies, and ends, like the mythic cosmogonies, in some irrepressible spontaneous impulse of matter to develope itself in the ever-changing forms of the visible universe. Myriads of gods were the actors in "the rushing metamorphosis" of the old myth-haunted Nature; while chemic and elemental forces perform the same parts in the masquerade of the modern *Phasis*. Both mythology and science, therefore, stick fast in secondary causes.

Myths are the religion of youth, and of primitive, unsophisticated nations; while science may be called the religion

of the mature man, full of experience and immersed in the actual. The Positivism of Comte, like the old myth-worship, sets up for its deity human nature idealized, adorned with genius and virtue. The Positivist worships virtuous human nature, conditioned and limited as it is; while the Mythist worshipped it reflected on the outer world and endowed with supernatural attributes, clothed with mist-caps and wishing-caps that gave it dominion over space and time. The restless, glittering, whimsical sprites of fairy mythology, that were believed of old to have so large a share in shaping the course of Nature and of human life, have vanished from the precincts of the schoolmaster at least. They could not endure the clear eyebeam of Science, which has searched their subterranean abodes, withering them up and metamorphosing them into mere physiological forces. Reason and scientific investigation have no patience with the things of faith and imagination. Our poets now have to go back to the Past, to the standpoints of the old pagan bards. Tennyson lives in the land of the Lotophagi, in the Arabian Nights of the Bagdad of Caliph Haroun, and in the orchard lawns of King Arthur's Avalon. So, too, Longfellow must inhale the golden legendary air of the Past. The mere humanitarian bards, who try to make modern life trip to the music of trochees, dactyles, and spondees, fail miserably. Industrialism is not poetical. Our modern life expresses itself in machines, in mathematical formulas, in statistics and with scientific precision generally. Art and poetry are pursued in the spirit of past ages, and concern themselves with the symbols,

faiths, and ideal creations of the Past.

It is true, however, that all past ages of the world are contemporaneous in this age. For example, we have in this nineteenth century the patriarchal age of the world still surviving in the desert tents of the Arab,—while the mythic, anthropomorphic period is still extant in Persia, China, and India, and even among the nations of the West, in the rustic nooks and corners of the Roman Catholic countries of Europe. But the existing nations, which still preserve that old ethnic worship and the mediaeval superstitions, are mere lingerers and camp-followers in the march of humankind. Under the ample skirts of the Roman Church still cower and lurk the superstitions of the old ethnic world, baptized to be sure, and called by new names. The Roman see has ever had a lingering kindness for the fair humanities of old religion, which live no longer in the faith of Protestant reason and free inquiry. She compromised with them of old, and they have clung about her waist ever since. She has put her uniform upon them, and made them do service in her cause, and keep alive with their breath the fast expiring embers of faith and imaginative credulity, which she so much loves and commends. Like an equivocal and ambiguous nature, the old Mother Church, as she is called, is upward fair and Christian, but downward foul and ethnic. She attacks human nature on the side of the heart, the senses, and those old instincts which Coleridge says bring back the old names. Reason and intellection, sharpened by science, she abhors; but so large a part of mankind

still linger in the rear of the vanguard nations, that she has yet a long lease of life to run, with myriads of adherents to cling to her with fanatical tenacity,—nay, with proselytes from amongst the poetical, the artistic, and imaginative, who voluntarily prefer to the broad sunshine of science the twilight gloom of her sanctuaries, in order there the better to woo the old inspiration of art, superstitious faith, and poesy. The old ethnic instincts of human nature are formidable auxiliaries of the Mother Church. Puseyism would rehallow the saintly wells even of Protestant, practical England, and send John Bull again on a pilgrimage to the shrines of Canterbury and Walsingham. Compare a Yankee, common-school-bred, and an Austrian peasant, if you would learn how the twelfth and nineteenth centuries live together in the current year. The one is self-reliant, helpful, and versatile, not freighted with any old-world rubbish; while the other is abject, and blindly reverent, and full of the old mythic imagination that is in strong contrast with the keen common-sense of the Protestant, who dispels all twilight fantasies with a laugh of utter incredulity. The one sees projected on the outer world his own imaginings, now fair, now gloomy; while the other sees in the world, land to be cut up into corner-lots for speculation, and water for sawmills and cotton-mills, and to float clipper-ships and steamers. The one is this-worldly; the other is other-worldly. The one is armed and equipped at all points to deal with the Actual, to subdue it and make the most of it; he aims for success and wealth, for elegance, plenty, and comfort in his home;—while the other is negligent, a

frequenter of shrines, in all things too superstitious, overlooking and slighting mere physical comfort, and content with misery and dirt. The Romish peasant lives begirt by supernatural beings, who demand a large share of his time and thoughts for their service; while the thrifty Protestant artisan or agriculturist is a practical naturalist, keeping his eye fixed on the main chance. Brownson would have us believe that he is morally and spiritually the inferior of the former. For this light of common day, which now shines upon the world, the multiplication-table, and reading and writing, are far better than amulet, rosary, and crucifix.

After all, this light of common day, which the bards and saints so much condemn and disdain, when subjected to the microscopic and telescopic ken of modern science, opens as large a field for wonder and for the imagination to revel in as did the old marvels, fables, and fictions of the Past. The True is beginning to be found as strange, nay, stranger than the purely Imaginative and Mythic. The Beautiful and the Good will yet be found to be as consistent with the strictly True and Actual, with the plain Matter-of-Fact as it is called, as they have been, in the heroic ages of human-achievement and endurance, with the glorious cheats and delusions that nerved man to high emprise. The modern scientific discoverer and inventor oftentimes finds himself engaged in quests as strange as that of the Holy Grail of Round-Table fiction. To the Past, with its mythic delusions, simplicity, and dense ignorance of Nature, we can never return, any more than the mature man can shrink into the fresh boy

again. Nor is it to be regretted. The distant in time, like the distant in space, wears a halo, a vague, blue loveliness, which is all unreal. The tired wayfarer, who is weary with the dust, the din, and stony footing of the Actual and the Present, may sometimes fondly imagine, that, if he could return to the far Past, he would find all smooth and golden there; but it is a pleasant delusion of that glorious arch-cheat, the Imagination. Yet if we cannot go back to the Past, we can march forward to a Future, which opens a deeper and more wondrous and airier vista, with its magicians of the Actual casting into shade the puny achievements of old necromancy and mythic agencies.

* * * * *

JUANITA

Yes! I had, indeed, a glorious revenge! Other people have had home, love, happiness; they have had fond caresses, tender cares, the bright faces of children shining round the board. I had none of these; my revenge has stood to me in place of them all. And it has stood well.

Love may change; loved ones may die; the fair-faced children may grow up hard-hearted and ungrateful. But my revenge will not deceive or disappoint me; it cannot change or pass away; it will last through Time into Eternity.

I was left an orphan in early childhood. My father was an officer in the American Navy; my mother a Spaniard. She was very beautiful, I always heard; and her miniature, which my father's dying hand placed about my neck, proclaimed her so. A pale, clear, olive tint, eyes of thrilling blackness, long, lustrous hair, and a look of mingled tenderness and melancholy made it, in my thought, the loveliest face that mortal eyes could see.

My parents left me no fortune, and I fell to the care of my father's only brother, a man of wealth and standing. I have no story to tell of the bitterness of dependence,—of slights, and insult, and privation. My uncle had married, somewhat late in life, a young and gentle woman; when I was twelve years old she became the mother of twins,—two lovely little girls. No one, unacquainted with the family history, could have supposed

that I was other than the elder sister of Florence and Leonora. Every indulgence was granted me, every advantage of dress and education bestowed upon me. So far as even I could see, my uncle and aunt regarded me as their own child. Nor was I ungrateful, but repaid them with a filial reverence and affection.

I did not inherit the fulness of my mother's beauty, but had yet some traits of her,—the pale, clear skin, the large, black eyes, the glossy and abundant hair. Here the resemblance ceased. I have heard my uncle say,—how often!—"Your mother, Juanita, had the most perfect form I ever saw, except in marble"; all Spanish women, indeed, he told me, had a full, elastic roundness of shape and limb, rarely seen among our spare and loose-built nation. I was American in form, at least,—slight and stooping, with a certain awkwardness, partly to be imputed to my rapid growth, partly to my shyness and reserve. I was insatiably fond of reading, little attracted toward society. When my uncle's house, as often happened, was full of gay company, I withdrew to my own room, and read my favorite authors in its pleasant solitude. I was ill at ease with lively, fashionable people,—very much at home with books. Thanks to my uncle's care, I was well educated, even scholarly, for my age and sex. My studious habits, far from being discouraged, were praised by all the household, and I was looked upon as a prodigy of cleverness and industry.

A widow lady, of the name of Haughton, came to live in the little cottage near us when I was fifteen years old. She was well-born, but poor, and had known many sorrows. My aunt, Mrs.

Heywood, soon became interested in her, and took pleasure in offering her those numerous attentions which a wealthy neighbor can so easily bestow, and which are so grateful to the recipient. Mrs. Haughton and her sons were frequent guests at our house; and we, too, spent many pleasant hours in the vine-covered porch of the cottage. I had few companions, and John and William Haughton were very welcome to me. They were somewhat older than I,—John twenty-two, and William two years younger; and I was thus just able to escape regarding them with that profound contempt which the girl of fifteen usually feels for "boys." After knowing them awhile I felt how baseless such contempt would be; for they possessed a depth and maturity of character rarely seen except in men of much experience. John was grave and thoughtful; his livelier brother often said he had come into the world some centuries too late,—that he was meant for an Augustine or a Pascal, so studious was he, and so saintly. Do not fancy that he was one of those stiff, bespectacled, pedantic youths who cannot open their lips without a classic allusion or a Greek quotation; nothing could be farther from the truth. He was quiet and retiring; very few guessed how beneath that exterior, so unassuming, lay hid the noblest aspirations, the most exalted thought. It was John I should have loved.

But it was William who won my heart, even without an effort. I, the pale, serious girl, loved with a wild idolatry the gay and careless youth. Never, from that day till now, have I seen a man so perfect in all manly beauty. Strength and symmetry were

united in his tall, athletic figure; his features were large, but nobly formed; his hair, of a sunny hue, fell in rich masses over a broad, white brow. So might Apollo have looked in the flush of his immortal youth.

At first I gazed at him only with the enthusiasm which his extreme beauty might well awaken in the heart of a romantic maiden; then I grew to see in the princely type of that beauty a reflection of his mind. Did ever any fond fool so dote upon her Ideal as I on mine? All generous thoughts, all noble deeds, seemed only the fit expression of his nature. Then I came to mingle a reverence with my admiration. We were friends; he talked to me much of his plans in life,—of the future that lay before him. What an ambitious spirit burned within him!—a godlike ambition I thought it then. And how my weak, womanish heart thrilled with sympathy to his! With what pride I listened to his words! with what fervor I joined in his longings!

There came a time when I trembled before him. I could no longer walk calmly arm-in-arm with him under the linden-trees, hearkening joyfully. I dared not lift my eyes to his face; I turned pale with suppressed feeling, if he but spoke my name—Juanita—or took my hand in his for friendly greeting. What a hand it was!—so white, and soft, and shapely, yet so powerful! It was the right hand for him,—a fair and delicate seeming, a cruel, hidden strength. When he spoke of the future my heart cried out against it; it was intolerable to me. In its bright triumphs I could have no part; thereto I could follow him only with my love and tears. The

present alone was mine, and to that I passionately clung. For I never dreamed, you see, that he could love me.

My manner toward him changed; I was fitful and capricious. I dreaded, above all things, that he should suspect my feelings. Sometimes I met him coldly; sometimes I received his confidences with an indifferent and weary air. This could not last.

One night—it was a little time before he left us—he begged me to walk with him once more under the lindens. I made many excuses, but he overruled them all. We left the brilliantly-lighted rooms and stood beneath the solemn shadow of the trees. It was a warm, soft night; the harvest moon shone down upon us; a south wind moaned among the branches. We walked silently on till we reached a rustic seat, formed of gnarled boughs fantastically bound together; here he made me sit down and placed himself beside me.

"Juanita," he said, in a tone so soft, so thrillingly musical, that I shall never forget it, "what has come between us? Are you no longer my friend?"

I tried to answer him, and could not; love and grief choked my utterance.

"Look at me," he said.

I looked. The moon shone full on his face; his eyes were bent on mine. What a serpent-charm lurked in their treacherous blue depths! If, looking at me thus, he had bidden me kill myself at his feet, I must have done it.

"Juanita," he said, with a smile of conscious power, "you love

me! But why should that destroy our happiness?"

He held out his arms; I threw myself on his bosom in an agony of shame and joy. Oh, Heaven! could it be possible that he loved me at last?

Long, long, we sat there in the moonlight, his arms around me, my hand clasped in his. Poor hand! even by that faint radiance how dark and thin it looked beside his, so white and rounded! How gloriously beautiful was he! what a poor, pale shadow I! And yet he loved me! He did not talk much of it; he spoke more of the future,—*our* future. It all lay before him, a bright, enchanted land, wherein we two should walk together. We had not quite reached it, but we surely should, and that ere long.

The steps toward it were prosaic enough, save as his imagination brightened them. An early friend of his dead father, a distinguished lawyer, wishing to further William's advancement in life, gave him the opportunity of studying his profession with him,—offering him, at the same time, a home in his own family. From these slender materials William's fancy built air-castles the most magnificent. He would study assiduously; with such a prize in view, he fondly said, his patience would never weary. He felt within himself the consciousness of talent; and talent and industry *must* succeed. A bright career was before him,—fame, fortune; and all were to be laid at my feet; all would be valueless, if not shared with me.

"Ah, William," I asked, with a moment's sorrowful doubt, "are you sure of that? Are you certain that it is not fame you look

forward so eagerly to possess, instead of me?"

"How *dare* you say such a thing?" he answered, sternly. I did not mind the sternness; there was love behind it.

"And what am I to do while you are thus winning gold and glory?" I asked, at length.

"I will tell you, Juanita. In the first place, you are *not* to waste your time and spirits in long, romantic reveries, and vain pining because we cannot be together."

"Indeed, I will not!" was my quick reply, though I colored deeply. I was ashamed that he thought me in danger of loving him too well. "I know you think me foolish and sentimental; but I assure you I will try to be different, since you wish it."

"That is my own dear girl! You must go out,—you must see people,—you must enjoy yourself. You must study, too; don't let your mind rust because you are engaged. It will be quite time enough for that when we are married."

"You need not be afraid; I shall always wish to please you, William, and so I shall always endeavor to improve."

"Good child!" he said, laughing. "But you will not always be such an obedient infant, Juanita. You will find out your power over me, and then you will want to exercise it, just for the pleasure of seeing me submit. You will be despotic about the veriest trifles, only to show me that my will must bow to yours."

"That will never be! I have no will of my own, where you are concerned,

William. I only ask to know your wishes, that I may perform

them."

"Is that indeed so?" he said, with a new tenderness of manner. "I am very glad; for, to tell the truth, my love, I fear I should have little patience with womanish caprices. I have reasons always for what I do and for what I require, and I could not long love any one who opposed them."

Again I assured him that he need feel no such dread. How happy we were!—yes, I believe he loved me enough then to be happy, even as I was.

It was so late before we thought of going in, that a messenger was sent to seek us, and many a fine jest we had to encounter when we reached the drawing-room.

The next day, William spoke to my uncle, who seemed to regard the matter in a light very different from ours. He said, we were a mere boy and girl, that years must elapse before we could marry, and by that time we should very probably have outgrown our liking for each other; still, if we chose, we might consider ourselves engaged; he did not know that he had any objection to make. This manner of treating the subject was not a flattering one; however, we had his consent,—and that was the main point, after all.

So we were troth-plight; and William went forth on his career of labor and success, and I remained at home, loving him, living for him, striving to make my every act what he would have it. I went into company as he had bidden me; I studied and improved myself; I grew handsomer, too. All who saw me noticed and

approved the alteration in my appearance. I was no longer awkward and stooping; my manner had acquired something of ease and gracefulness; a faint bloom tinged my cheek and made my dark eyes brighter. I was truly happy in the change; it seemed to render me a little more suited to him, who was so proudly, so splendidly handsome.

I remembered what he had said too well to spend much time in love-dreams; but my happiest moments were when I was alone, and could think of him, read his letters, look at his picture, and fancy the joyfulness of his return.

His letters!—there the change first showed itself. At first they were all, and more than all, I could wish. I blushed to read the ardent words, as I did when he had spoken them. But by-and-by there was a different tone: I could not describe it; there was nothing to complain of; and yet I felt—so surely!—that something was wrong. I never thought of blaming him; I dreaded lest I had in some way wounded his affection or his pride. I asked no explanation; I thought to do so might annoy or vex him, for his was a peculiar nature. I only wrote to him the more fondly, —strove more and more to show him how my whole heart was his. But the change grew plainer as months passed on; and some weeks before the time appointed for his return, the letters ceased altogether.

This conduct grieved me, certainly, yet I was more perplexed than unhappy. It never occurred to me to doubt his love; I thought there must be some mistake, some offence unwittingly given,

and I looked to his coming to clear away all doubt and trouble. But I longed so for that coming!—it seemed as if the weeks would never end. I knew he loved me; but I needed to hear him say it once more,—to have every shadow dispelled, and nothing between us but the warmest affection and fullest confidence.

In such a mood I met him. The house was full of guests, and I could not bear to see him for the first time before so many eyes. I had watched, as may well be believed, for his arrival, and a little before dark had seen him enter his mother's house. He would surely come over soon; I ran down the long walk, and paced up and down beneath the trees, awaiting him. As soon as he came in sight I hastened toward him; he met me kindly, but the change that had been in his letters was plainer yet in his manner. It struck a chill to my heart.

"I suppose you have a house full of company, as usual," he remarked presently, glancing at the brilliant windows.

"Yes, we have a number of friends staying with us. Will you go in and see them? There are several whom you know."

"Thank you,—not to-night; I am not in the mood. And I have a good deal to say to you, Juanita, that deeply concerns us both."

"Very well," I replied; "you had better tell me at once."

We walked on to the old garden-chair, and sat down as we had done that memorable night. We were both silent,—I from disappointment and apprehension. He, I suppose, was collecting himself for what he had to say.

"Juanita," he spoke at last, taking my hand in his, "I do not

know how you will receive what I am about to tell you. But this I wish you to promise me: that you will believe I speak for our best happiness, —yours as well as mine."

"Go on," was all my reply.

"A year ago," he continued, "we sat here as we do now, and, spite of doubts and misgivings and a broken resolution, I was happier than I shall ever be again. I had loved you from the first moment I saw you, with a passion such as I shall never feel for any other woman. But I knew that we were both poor; I knew that marriage in our circumstances could only be disastrous. It would wear out your youth in servile cares; it would cripple my energies; it might even, after a time, change our love to disgust and aversion. And so, though I believed myself not indifferent to you, I resolved never to speak of my love, but to struggle against it, and root it out of my heart. You know how differently it happened. Your changed manner, your averted looks, gave me much pain. I feared to have offended you, or in some way forfeited your esteem. I brought you here to ask an explanation. I said, 'Juanita, are you no longer my friend?' You know what followed; the violence of your emotion showed me all. You remember?"

Did I not?—and was it not generous of him to remind me then?

"I saw you loved me, and the great joy of that knowledge made me forget prudence, reason, everything. Afterwards, when alone, I tried to justify to myself what I had done, and partially

succeeded. I argued that we were young and could wait; I dreamed, too, that my ardor could outrun time, and grasp in youth the rewards of mature life. In that hope I left you.

"Since then my views have greatly changed. I have seen something—not much, it is true—of men and of life, and have found that it is an easy thing to dream of success, but a long and difficult task to achieve it. That I have talent it would be affectation to deny; but many a poor and struggling lawyer is my equal. The best I can hope for, Juanita, is a youth of severe toil and griping penury, with, perhaps, late in life,—almost too late to enjoy it,—competence and an honorable name. And even that is by no means secure; the labor and the poverty may last my life long.

"You have been reared in the enjoyment of every luxury which wealth can command. How could you bear to suffer privations, to perform menial labors, to be stinted in dress, deprived of congenial society, obliged to refrain from every amusement, because you were unable to afford the expense? How should you like to have a grinding economy continually pressing upon you, in every arrangement of your household, every detail of your daily life? to have your best days pass in petty cares and sayings, all your intellect expended in the effort to make your paltry means do the greatest possible service?"

It was not a pleasant picture, but, harshly drawn as it was, I felt in the fulness of my love that I could do all that, and more, for him. Oh, yes! for him and with him I would have accepted

any servitude, any suffering. Yet a secret something withheld me from saying so; and how glad I soon was that I had kept silence!

"You make no reply, Juanita," he said. "Well, I might put on a pretence of disinterestedness, and say that I was unwilling to bind you to such a fate, and therefore released you from your engagement. It would not be altogether a pretence, for nothing could be more painful to me than to see the brightness of your youth fading away in the life I have described. But I think of myself, too; comforts, luxuries, indulgences, I value highly. Since my father's death I have tasted enough of poverty to know something of its bitterness; and to be doomed to it for life is appalling to me. The sordid cares of narrow means are so distasteful, that I cannot contemplate them with any degree of patience. After a day of exhausting mental effort, to return to a dingy, ill-furnished home,—to relieve professional labors by calculations about the gas-bill or the butcher's account,—I shrink from such a miserable prospect! I love the elegant, the high-bred, the tasteful, in women; I am afraid even my love for you would alter, Juanita, to see you day by day in coarse or shabby clothing, performing such offices as are only suited to servants,—whom we could not afford to keep.

"I have thought of it a great deal, and it seems to me that it is useless and hopeless, that it would be the wildest folly, to continue our engagement. With our tastes and habits, we must seek in marriage the means of comfort, the appliances of luxury. Others may find in it the bewildering bliss we might have known,

had fortune been favorable to us; but, as it is, I think the best, the wisest, the happiest thing we can do is—to part!"

Oh, Heaven! this from him!

"Still, Juanita, if you think otherwise," he went on after a moment's pause,—"if you prefer to hold me to our engagement, I am ready to fulfil it when you wish."

It was like a man to say this, and then to feel that he had acted uprightly and honorably!

I said nothing for a time; I could not speak. All hell woke in my heart. I knew then what lost spirits might feel,—grief, and wounded pride, and rage, hatred, despair! In the midst of all I made a vow; and I kept it well!

How I had loved this man!—with what a self-forgetting, adoring love! He had been my thought, day and night. I would have done anything,—sacrificed, suffered anything,—yes, sinned even,—to please his lightest fancy. And he cast me coldly off because I had no fortune!—trampled my heart into the dust because I was poor!

"You make no answer, Juanita," he said, at length.

"I am thinking," I replied, looking up and laughing slightly, "how to say that I quite agree with you, and have been planning all day how I should manage to tell you the very same thing."

Miserable falsehood! But I spoke it so coolly, that he was thoroughly deceived. He never suspected the truth,—my deep love, my outraged pride.

"It is just as you have said, William. We have elegant tastes,

and no means of gratifying them. What should we do together? Only make each other miserable. You need a rich wife, I a rich husband, who can supply us with the indulgences we demand. To secure these we can well make the sacrifice of a few romantic fancies."

"I am glad you think so," he replied, yet somewhat absently.

"You must wait awhile for Florence," I continued; "she is four years old, and twelve years hence you will yet be quite a personable individual. And Florence will have a fortune worth waiting for, I assure you. Or perhaps you have somebody more eligible already in view. Come, William, be frank,—tell me all about it."

"I did not expect this levity, Juanita," he answered, severely. "You must know that I have never thought of such a thing. And believe me," he said, in a tenderer tone, "that, among all the beautiful women I have seen,—and some have not disdained to show me favor,—none ever touched my heart for a moment. Had we any reasonable prospect of happiness, I could never give you up; I love you better a thousand times than anything in the world."

"Except yourself," I said, mockingly; and I looked at him with a mischievous smile, while a storm of passion raged in my heart and my brain seemed on fire. "Be it so! I do not complain of such a splendid rival. But really, William, I cannot boast of constancy like yours, even; though I suppose most people would consider that rather a poor, flawed specimen. It hurt my dignity very much when Uncle Heywood called our attachment a boy-and-

girl affair; but I soon found that he knew best about it. For a time I kept my love very warm and glowing; but it was not long ere the distractions you bade me seek in society proved more potent than I wished. I found there were other things to be enjoyed than dreams of you, and even—shall I confess it? I can now, I suppose —other people to be admired as well as you!"

"Indeed!" he said, with ill-concealed annoyance. "You had a great talent for concealment, then; your letters showed no trace of the change."

"I know they didn't," I answered, laughing. "I hated very much to admit even to myself that I had altered; it seemed, you know, so capricious and childish,—in short, so far from romantic. I kept up the illusion as long as I could; used to go off alone to read your letters, look at your picture, and fancy I felt just as at first. Then when I sat down to write, and remembered how handsome you were, and all that had happened, the old feelings would come back, and for the time you were all I cared for. But I am very glad we have had this explanation, and understand each other. We shall both be happier for it."

I had a little taste of vengeance, even then, when I saw how his vanity was wounded. He tried to look relieved,—I dare say he tried to feel so,—but I question very much whether he was pleased with himself that he had been so cool and philosophical. He did not wish to make me wretched; but he had expected I would be so, as a matter of course. To find me so comfortable under the infliction perplexed and disconcerted him.

"This will not make any coldness between us, I hope?" he said, at last.

"We will be friends still, dear Juanita?"

"Yes," I replied, "we will be friends, dear William. We are a great deal more in our true relations thus than as lovers."

"And your uncle's family," he inquired,—"shall we explain all to them?"

"There is no need of that," I answered, carelessly. "Let things pass. After a time they will perhaps notice that there is a change, and I can tell them that we are both tired of the engagement. They will ask no further questions."

"Thank you," he said. "It will save me some embarrassment."

"Yes," I replied, looking at him steadily, "I think it would have been a rather awkward topic for you to broach."

His eye fell before mine; through all the sophistry he had used, I think some slight sense of the baseness of his conduct forced itself upon his mind.

"Now I must return to the house," I said, rising; "will you not come with me? My uncle and aunt will expect to see you, and Anna Gray is here. You can make your first essay toward the rich match this evening."

"Nonsense!" he said, impatiently, yet he accompanied me. I knew he did not like to lose sight of me.

Never had I exerted myself so much to please any one, as I did that night to charm and attract him;—not, indeed, by any marked attention; that would have failed of its object. But I talked and

danced; I displayed for his benefit all that I had acquired of ease and manner since he left. I saw his astonishment, that the pale, quiet girl who was wont to sit in some corner, almost unnoticed, should now be the life of that gay circle. I made him admire me most at the very moment he had lost me forever,—and so far, all was well.

I went to my room that night a different creature. That place had been a kind of sanctuary to me. By its vine-draped window I had loved to sit and think of him, to read the books he liked, and fashion my mind to what he could approve. But the spot which I had left, a hopeful and loving girl, I returned to, a forsaken and revengeful woman. My whole nature was wrought up to one purpose,—to repay him, to the last iota, all he had made me suffer, all the humiliation, the despair. It was strange how this purpose upbore and consoled me; for I needed consolation. I hated him, yet I loved him fiercely, too; I despised him, yet I knew no other man would ever touch my heart. He had been, he always must be, everything to me,—the one object to which all my thoughts tended, to which my every action was referred.

I took from a drawer his letters and his few love-gifts. The paper I tore to fragments and threw into the empty fireplace. I lighted the heap, and tossed the gifts, one after another, into the flame. Last of all, I drew his portrait from my bosom. I gazed at it an instant, pressed it to my lips. No,—I would not destroy this,—I would keep it to remind me.

I remember thinking, as I watched the flickering flame, that

this was something like a witch's incantation. I smiled at the idea.

The next morning there was only a heap of light ashes left in the grate. I pursued my purpose determinedly and with unflagging zeal. I did not know exactly how it would be realized, but I felt sure I should achieve it. My first care was to cultivate to the utmost every faculty I possessed. My education had been hitherto of rather a substantial order; I had few accomplishments. To these I turned my care. "What has a woman," I thought, "to do with solid learning? It never tells in society." I had observed the rapt attention with which William listened to music. Hitherto I had been only a passable performer, such as any girl of sixteen might be. But under the influence of this new motive I studied diligently; the best masters were supplied me; and soon my progress both astonished and delighted myself and all who heard me.

I have before said that a change for the better had taken place in my person; this I strove by every means in my power to increase. I rode, I walked, I plied the oars vigorously upon our little lake. My health grew firm, my cheeks more blooming, my form fuller and majestic. I took the greatest pains with my toilet. It was wonderful to see, day by day, as I looked into the mirror, the alteration that care and taste could effect in personal appearance. Could this erect, stately figure, with its air of grace and distinction, be one with the thin, stooping form, clad in careless, loose-fitting garb, which I so well remembered as myself? Could that brilliant face, with its bands of shining

hair, that smile of easy self-confidence, belong to me? What, had become of the pale, spiritless girl? My uncle sometimes asked the question, and, looking at me with a fond, admiring glance, would say,—"You were made for an empress, Juanita!" I knew then that I was beautiful, and rejoiced in the knowledge; but no tinge of vanity mingled with the joy. I cultivated my beauty, as I did my talents, for a purpose of which I never lost sight.

It was now I learned for the first time that John Haughton loved me. When it became generally understood that William and I were no longer engaged, John came forward. I do not know what he, so good, so high-minded, saw in me; but certainly he loved me with a true affection. When he avowed it, a strange joy seized me; I felt that now I held in my hand the key of William's destiny. Now I should not lose my hold on him; we could not drift apart in the tide of life. As John's bride, John's wife, there must always be an intimate connection between us. So I yielded with well-feigned tenderness to my lover's suit,—only stipulating, that, as some time must elapse before our marriage, no one should know of our attachment,—not even William, or his mother,—nor, on my part, any of my uncle's family. He made no objection; I believe he even took a romantic pleasure in the concealment. He liked to see me moving about in society, and to feel that there was a tie between us that none dreamed of but ourselves. Poor John! he deserved better of Fate than to be the tool of my revenge!

William came home, soon after our engagement, for his

annual visit. He was succeeding rather better than his dismal fancies had once prognosticated. He was very often at our house,—very much my friend. I saw through all that clearly enough; I knew he loved me a hundred-fold more passionately than in our earlier days; and the knowledge was to me as a cool draught to one who is perishing of thirst. I did all in my power to enhance his love; I sang bewildering melodies to him; I talked to him of the things he liked, and that roused his fine intellect to the exercise of its powers. I rode with him, danced with him; nor did I omit to let him see the admiration with which others of his sex regarded me. I was well aware that a man values no jewel so highly as that which in a brilliant setting calls forth the plaudits of the crowd. I talked to him often of his prospects and hopes; his ambition, all selfish as it was, fascinated me by its pride and daring. "Ah, William!" I sometimes thought, "you made a deadly mistake when you cast me off! You will never find another who can so enter, heart and soul, into all your brilliant projects!"

He came to me, one morning, rather earlier than his wont. I was reading, but laid aside my book to greet him.

"What have you there, Juanita? Some young-ladyish romance, I suppose."

"Not at all,—it is a very rational work; though I presume you will laugh at it, because it contains a little sentiment,—you are grown so hard and cold, of late."

"Do you think so?" he asked, with a look that belied the charge.

He took up the volume, and, glancing through it, read now and then a sentence.

"What say you to this, Juanita? 'If we are still able to love one who has made us suffer, we love him more than ever.' Is that true to your experience?"

"No," I answered, for I liked at times to approach the topic which was always uppermost in my mind, and to see his perfect unconsciousness of it. "If any one had made me suffer, I should not stop to inquire whether I were able to love him still or not; I should have but one thought left,—revenge!"

"How very fierce!" he said, laughing. "And your idea of revenge is—what? To stab him with your own white hand?"

"No!" I said, scornfully. "To kill a person you hate is, to my mind, the most pitiful idea of vengeance. What! put him out of the world at once? Not so! He should live," I said, fixing my eyes upon him,—"and live to suffer,—and to remember, in his anguish, why he suffered, and to whose hand he owed it!"

It was a hateful speech, and would have repelled most men; for my life I dared not have made it before John. But I knew to whom I was talking, and that he had no objection to a slight spice of *diablerie*.

"What curious glimpses of character you open to me now and then," he said, thoughtfully. "Not very womanly, however."

"Womanly!" I cried. "I wonder what a man's notion of woman is! Some soft, pulpy thing that thrives all the better for abuse? a spaniel that loves you more, the more you beat it? a worm that

grows and grows in new rings as often as you cut it asunder? I wonder history has never taught you better. Look at Judith with Holofernes,—Jael with Sisera,—or if you want profane examples, Catherine de Medicis, Mademoiselle de Brinvilliers, Charlotte Corday. There are women who have formed a purpose, and gone on steadily toward its accomplishment, even though, like that Roman girl,—Tullia was her name?—they had to drive over a father's corpse to do it."

"You have known such, perhaps," said Richard.

"Yes," I answered, with, a gentle smile, "I have. They wished no harm, it might be, to any one, but people stood in their way. It is as if you were going to the arbor after grapes, and there were a swarm of ants in the path. You have no malice against the ants, but you want the grapes,—so you walk on, and they are crushed."

I was thinking of John and of his love, but William did not know that. "You are a strange being!" he said, looking at me with a mixture of admiration and distrust.

"Ah! Well, you see my race is somewhat anomalous,—a blending of the Spaniard and the Yankee. Come, I will be all Spanish for a time; bring me the guitar. Now let me sing you a *romance*."

I struck the tinkling chords, and began a sweet love-ditty. Fixing my eyes on his, I made every word speak to his heart from mine. I saw his color change, his eyes melt;—when the song ended, he was at my feet.

I know not what he said; I only know it was passion, burning

and intense. Oh, but it was balm both to my love and hate to hear him! I let him go on as long as he would,—then I said, gently caressing his bright hair,—

"You forget, dear William, all those lessons of prudence you taught me not so very long ago."

He poured forth the most ardent protestations; he begged me to forget all that cold and selfish reasoning. Long since he had wished to offer me his hand, but feared lest I should repel him with scorn. Would I not pardon his former ingratitude, and return his love?

"But you forget, my friend," I said, "that circumstances have not altered, but only your way of viewing them; we must still be poor and humble. Don't you remember all your eloquent picturings of the life we should be obliged to lead? Don't you recollect the dull, dingy house, the tired, worn-out wife in shabby clothing"–

"Oh, hush, Juanita! Do not recall those wretched follies! Besides, circumstances have somewhat changed; I am not so very poor. My income, though small, will be sufficient, if well-managed, to maintain us in comfort and respectability."

"Comfort and respectability!" I exclaimed, with a shudder. "Oh, William, can you imagine that such words apply to me? The indulgences of wealth are necessary to me as the air I breathe. I suppose you would be able to shield me from absolute suffering; but that is not enough. Do not speak of this again, for both our sakes. And now, good friend," I added, in a lighter tone, "I advise

you to get up as soon as may be; we are liable to interruption at any time; and your position, though admirable for a *tableau*, would be a trifle embarrassing for ordinary life."

He started to his feet, and would have left me in anger, but I recalled him with a word. It was good to feel my power over this man who had slighted and rejected me. Before we parted that day he had quite forgiven me for refusing him and making him ridiculous; I thought a little of the spaniel was transferred to him. I saw, too, he had a hope, which I carefully forbore to contradict, that I preferred him to any other, and would accept him, could he but win a fortune for me. And so I sent him out into the world again, full of vain, feverish desires after the impossible. I gave him all the pains of love without its consolations. It was good, as far as it went.

John and I, meanwhile, got on very peacefully together. He was not demonstrative, nor did he exact demonstration from me. I had promised to marry him, and he trusted implicitly to my faith; while his love was so reverent, his ideal of maiden delicacy so exalted, that I should have suffered in his esteem, I verily believe, had my regard been shown other than by a quiet tenderness of manner.

About this time my uncle's family went abroad. They wished me to accompany them, but I steadily declined. When they pressed me for a reason, I told them of my engagement to John, and that I was unwilling to leave him for so long a time. The excuse was natural enough, and they believed me; and it was

arranged that during the period of their absence I should remain with a sister of Mrs. Heywood.

The time passed on. I saw William frequently. Often he spoke to me of his love, and I scarcely checked him; I liked to feed him with false hopes, as once he had done to me. He did not speak again of marriage; I knew his pride forbade it. I also knew that he believed I loved him, and would wait for him.

I heard often from our travellers, and always in terms of kindness and affection. At last their speedy return was announced; they were to sail in the "Arctic," and we looked joyfully forward to the hour of their arrival. Too soon came the news of the terrible disaster; a little while of suspense, and the awful certainty became apparent. My kind, indulgent uncle and all his family, whom I loved as I would my own parents and sisters, were buried in the depths of the Atlantic.

I will not attempt to describe my grief; it has nothing to do with the story that is written here. When, after a time, I came back to life and its interests, a startling intelligence awaited me. My uncle had died intestate; his wife and children had perished with him; as next of kin, I was sole heir to his immense estate. When my mind fully took in the meaning of all this I felt that a crisis was at hand. Day by day I looked for William.

I had not long to wait. I was sitting by my window on a bright October day, reading a book I loved well,—"Shirley," one of the three immortal works of a genius fled too soon. As I read, I traced a likeness to my own experience; Caroline was a curious

study to me. I marvelled at her meek, forgiving spirit; if I would not imitate, I did not condemn her.

Then I heard the gate-latch click; I looked out through the vine-leaves, all scarlet with the glory of the season, and saw William coming up the walk. I knew why he was there, and, still retaining the volume in my hand, went down to meet him.

We walked out in the grounds; it was a perfect afternoon; all the splendor of autumn, without a trace of its swift-coming decay. Gold, crimson, and purple shone the forests through their softening haze; and the royal hues were repeated on the mountain, reflected in the river. The sky was cloudless and intensely blue; the sunlight fell, with red glow, on the fading grass. A few late flowers of gorgeous hues yet lingered in the beds and borders; and a sweet wind, that might have come direct from paradise, sighed over all. William and I walked on, conversing.

At first we spoke of the terrible disaster and my loss; he could be gentle when he chose, and now his tenderness and sympathy were like a woman's. I almost forgot, in listening, what he was and had been to me. I was reminded when he began to speak of ourselves; I recalled it fully, when again, with all the power that passion and eloquence could impart, he declared his love, and begged me to be his.

I looked at him; to my eye he seemed happy, hopeful, triumphant; handsomer he could not be, and to me there was a strange fascination in his lofty, masculine beauty. I felt then, what I had always known, that I loved him even while I hated

him, and for an instant I wavered. Life with him! It looked above all things dear, desirable! But what! Show such a weak, such a *womanish* spirit? Give up my revenge at the very moment that it was within my grasp,—the revenge I had lived for through so many years? Never!—I recalled the night under the lindens, and was myself again.

"Dear William," I said, gently, "you amaze and distress me. Such love as a sister may give to an only brother you have long had from me. Why ask for any other?"

"'A sister's love!'" he cried, impatiently. "I thought, Juanita, you were above such paltry subterfuges! Is it as a brother I have loved you all these long and weary years?"

"Perhaps not,—I cannot say. At any rate," I continued, gravely, "a sisterly affection is all I can give you now."

"You are trifling with me, Juanita! Cease! It is unworthy of you."

He seized my hand, and clasped it to his breast. How wildly his heart beat under my touch! I trembled from head to foot,—but I said, in a cold voice, "You are a good actor, William!"

"You cannot look in my eyes and say you believe that charge," he answered.

I essayed to do it,—but my glance fell before his, so ardent, so tender. Spite of myself, my cheeks burned with blushes. Quietly I withdrew my hand and said, "I am to be married to John in December."

Ah, but there was a change then! The flush and the triumph

died out of his face, as when a lamp is suddenly extinguished. Yet there was as much indignation as grief in his voice when he said,—

"Heaven forgive you, Juanita! You have wilfully, cruelly deceived me!"

"Deceived you!" I replied, rising with dignity. "Make no accusation. If deceived you were, you have simply your own vanity, your own folly, to blame for whatever you may suffer."

"You have listened to my love, and encouraged me to hope"–

"Silence! I did love you once,—your cold heart can never guess how well, how warmly. I would have loved on through trial and suffering forever; no one could have made me believe anything against you; nothing could have shaken my fidelity, or my faith in yours. It was reserved for yourself to work my cure, —for your own lips to pronounce the words that changed my love to cool contempt."

"Oh, Juanita," he cried, passionately, "will you always be so vindictive? Will you forever remind me of that piece of insane folly? Let it go,—it was a boy's whim, too silly to remember."

"You were no boy then," I answered. "You had a mature prudence,—a careful thoughtfulness for self. Or if otherwise, in your case the child was indeed father to the man."

"Your love is dead, then, I suppose?" he questioned, with a bitter smile.

I handed him the book I had been reading. It was marked at these words: "Love can excuse anything except meanness;

but meanness kills love, cripples even natural affection; without esteem, true love cannot exist."

William raised his head with an air of proud defiance. "And in what sense," he asked, "do such words apply to me?"

"You are strangely obtuse," I said. "You see no trace of yourself in that passage—no trace of meanness in the man who cast off the penniless orphan, with her whole heart full of love for him, yet pleads so warmly with the rich heiress, when he knows she is pledged to another?"

"You have said enough, Juanita," he replied, with concentrated passion. "This is too much to bear, even from you, from whom I have already endured so much. You *know* you do not believe it."

"I *do* believe it," was my firm reply. It was false, but what did I care? It served my purpose.

"I might bid you remember," he said, "how I urged you to be mine when my prospects had grown brighter, and you were poor as before. I might appeal to the manner in which my suit has been urged for years, as a proof of my innocence of this charge that you have brought against me. But I disdain to plead my cause with so unwomanly a heart,—that measures the baseness of others by what it knows of its own."

He went, and for a time I was left in doubt whether my victory had been really achieved. Then I thought it all over, and was reassured. He could not simulate those looks and tones,—no, nor that tumult of feeling which had made his heart throb so wildly

beneath my hand. He loved me,—that was certain; and no matter how great his anger or his indignation, my refusal must have cut him to the soul. And the charge I had made would rankle, too. These thoughts were my comfort when John told me, with grief and surprise, that his brother had joined the Arctic expedition under Dr. Kane. I knew it was for no light cause he would forsake the career just opening so brightly before him.

John and I were married in December, as had been our intention. We led a quiet, but to him a happy, life. He often wondered at my content with home and its seclusion, and owned what fears he had felt, before our marriage, lest I, accustomed to gayety and excitement, should weary of him, the thoughtful, book-loving man. It seemed he had made up his mind to all manner of self-sacrifice in the way of accompanying me to parties, and having guests at our own house. I did not exact much from him; I cared little for the gay world in which William no longer moved. I read with John his favorite books; I interested myself in the sciences which he pursued with such enthusiasm. It was no part of my plan to inflict unnecessary misery on any one, and I strove with all my power to make happy the man whom I had chosen. I succeeded fully; and when we sat on the piazza in the moonlight, my head resting on his shoulder, my hand clasped in his, he would tell me how infinitely dearer the wife had grown to be than even the lover's fancy had portrayed her.

And my thoughts were far away from the bland airs and brightening moon amid the frozen solitudes of the North. Where

was William? what was he doing? did he think of me? and how? What if he should perish there, and we should never meet again? Life grew blank at the thought; I put it resolutely away.

I had drunk of the cup of vengeance; it was sweet, but did not satisfy. I longed for a fuller draught; but might it not be denied to my fevered lips? Perhaps, amid the noble and disinterested toils of the expedition, his heart would outgrow all love for me, and when we met again I should see my power was gone. I pondered much on this; I believed at last that the solitude, the isolation, would be not unpropitious to me. From the little world of the ice-locked vessel his thoughts would turn to the greater world he had left, and I should be remembered. When he returned we should be much together. His mother was dead; our house was the only place he could call his home. Not even for me, I felt assured, would he cast off the love of his only brother. I had not done with him yet. So quietly and composedly I awaited his return.

He came at last, and his manner when we met smote me with a strange uneasiness. It was not the estrangement of a friend whom I had injured, but the distant politeness of a stranger. Was my influence gone? I determined to know, once for all. When we chanced to be alone a moment I went to his side. "William," I asked, laying my hand on his arm, and speaking in a tender, reproachful tone, "why do you treat me so?"

With a quick, decided motion, he removed my hand,—then looked down on me with a smile. "'You are strangely obtuse,'" he said, quoting my own words of two years before. "What can

Mrs. Haughton desire from a base fortune-hunter with whom she is unhappily connected by marriage, but a humility that does not presume on the relationship?"

I saw a bold stroke was needed, and that I must stoop to conquer. "Oh, William," I said, sorrowfully, "you called me vindictive once, but it is you who are really so. I was unhappy, harassed, distracted between"–

"Between what?"

"I do not know—I mean I cannot tell you," I stammered, with well-feigned confusion. "Can you not forgive me, William? Often and often, since you left me that day, I have wished to see you, and to tell you how I repented my hasty and ungenerous words. Will you not pardon me? Shall we not be friends again?"

"I am not vindictive," he said, more kindly,—"least of all toward you. But I cannot see how you should desire the friendship of one whom you regard as a mercenary hypocrite. When you can truthfully assure me that you disbelieve that charge, then, and not till then, will I forgive you and be your friend."

"Let it be now, then," I said, joyfully, holding out my hand. He did not reject it;—we were reconciled.

William had come home ill; the hardships of the expedition and the fearful cold of the Arctic Zone had been too much for him. The very night of his return I noticed in his countenance a frequent flush succeeded by a deadly pallor; my quick ear had caught, too, the sound of a cough,—not frequent or prolonged, but deep and hollow. And now, for the first time in my long and

dreary toil, I saw the path clear and the end in view.

Every one knows with what enthusiasm the returned travellers were hailed. Amid the felicitations, the praises, the banquets, the varied excitements of the time, William forgot his ill-health. When these were over, he reopened his office, and prepared to enter once more on the active duties of his profession. But he was unfit for it; John and I both saw this, and urged him to abandon the attempt for the present,—to stay with us, to enjoy rest, books, society, and not till his health was fully reestablished undertake the prosecution of business.

"You forget, my good sister," he laughingly said to me one day,—(he could jest on the subject now,)—"that I have not the fortune of our John,—I did not marry an heiress, and I have my own way to make. I had got up a few rounds of the ladder when an adverse fate dragged me down. Being a free man once more, I must struggle up again as quickly as may be."

"Oh, for that matter," I returned, in the same tone, "I had some part, perhaps, in the adverse fate you speak of; so it is but fair that I should make you what recompense I can. I am an admirable nurse; and you will gain time, if you will deliver yourself up to my care, and not go back to Coke and Chitty till I give you leave. Seriously, William, I fear you do not know how ill you are, and how unsafe it is for you to go on with business."

He yielded without much persuasion, and came home to us. Those were happy days. William and I were constantly together. I read to him, I sung to him, and played chess with him; on mild

days I drove him out in my own little pony-carriage. Did he love me all this time? I could not tell. Never by look or tone did he intimate that the old affection yet lived in his heart. I fancied he felt as I with him,—perfect content in my companionship, without a thought or wish beyond. We were made for each other; our tastes, our habits of mind and feeling, fully harmonized; had we been born brother and sister, we should have preferred each other to all the world, and, remaining single for each other's sakes, have passed our lives together.

So the time wore on, sweetly and placidly, and only I seemed to notice the failure in our invalid; but I watched for it too keenly, too closely, to be blinded. The occasional rallies of strength that gave John such hope, and cheered William himself so greatly, did not deceive me; I knew they were but the fluctuations of his malady. Changes in the weather, or a damp east wind, did not account to me for his relapses; I knew he was in the grasp of a fell, a fatal disease; it might let him go awhile, give him a little respite, as a cat does the mouse she has caught,—but he never could escape,—his doom was fixed.

But you may be sure I gave him no hint of it, and he never seemed to suspect it for himself. One could not believe such blindness possible, did we not see it verified in so many instances, year after year.

Often, now, I thought of a passage in an old book I used to read with many a heart-quake in my girlish days. It ran thus: —"Perhaps we may see you flattering yourself, through a long,

lingering illness, that you shall still recover, and putting off any serious reflection and conversation for fear it should overset your spirits. And the cruel kindness of friends and physicians, as if they were in league with Satan to make the destruction of your soul as sure as possible, may, perhaps, abet this fatal deceit." We had all the needed accessories: the kind physician, anxious to amuse and fearful to alarm his patient,—telling me always to keep up his spirits, to make him as cheerful and happy as I could; and the cruel friends—I had not far to seek for them.

For a time William came down-stairs every morning, and sat up during the greater part of the day. Then he took to lying on the sofa for hours together. At last, he did not rise till afternoon, and even then was too much fatigued to sit up long. I prepared for his use a large room on the south side of the house, with a smaller apartment within it; to this we carried his favorite books and pictures, his easy-chair and lounge. My piano stood in a recess; a guitar hung near it. When all was finished, it looked homelike, pleasant; and we removed William to it, one mild February day.

"This is a delightful room," he said, gazing about him. "How pleasant the view from these windows will be as spring comes on!"

"You will not need it," I said, "by that time."

"I should be glad, if it were so," he replied; "but I am not quite so sanguine as you are, Juanita."

He did not guess my meaning; how should he, amused, flattered, kept along as he had been? To him, life, with all

its activities, its prizes, its pleasures, seemed but a little way removed; a few weeks or months and he should be among them again. But I knew, when he entered that room, that he never would go forth again till he was borne where narrower walls and a lowlier roof should shut him in.

I had an alarm one day. "Juanita," said the invalid, when I had arranged his pillows comfortably, and was about to begin the morning's reading, "do not take the book we had yesterday. I wish you would read to me in the Bible."

What did this mean? Was this proud, worldly-minded man going to humble himself, and repent, and be forgiven? And was I to be defrauded thus of my just revenge? Should he pass away to an eternal life of holiness and joy,—while I, stained through him and for his sake with sins innumerable, sank ever lower and lower in unending misery and despair? Oh, I must stop this, if it were not yet too late.

"What!" I said, pretending to repress a smile, "are you getting alarmed about yourself, William? Or is Saul really going to be found among the prophets, after all?"

He colored, but made no reply. I opened the Bible and read two or three of the shorter Psalms,—then, from the New Testament, a portion of the Sermon on the Mount.

"It must have been very sweet," I observed, "for those who were able to receive Jesus as the true Messiah, and his teachings as infallible, to hear these words from his lips."

"And do you not so receive them?" William asked.

"We will not speak of that; my opinion is of no weight."

"But you must have thought much of these things," he persisted; "tell me what result you have arrived at."

"Candidly, then," I said, "I have read and pondered much on what this book contains. It seems to me, that, if it teaches anything, it clearly teaches, that, no matter how we flatter ourselves that we are doing as we choose, and carrying out our own designs and wishes, we are all the time only fulfilling purposes that have been fixed from all eternity. Since, then, we are the subjects of an Inexorable Will, which no entreaties or acts of ours can alter or propitiate, what is there for us to do but simply to bear as best we can what comes upon us? It is a short creed."

"And a gloomy one," he said.

"You are right; a very gloomy one. If you can rationally adopt a cheerfuller, pray, do it. I do not wish for any companion in mine."

There was silence for a time, and then I said, with affectionate earnestness, "Dear William, why trouble yourself with these things in your weak and exhausted state? Surely, the care of your health is enough for you, now. By-and-by, when you have in some measure regained your strength, look seriously into this subject, if you wish. It is an important one for all. I am afraid I gave you an overdose of anodyne last night, and am to blame for your low spirits of this morning. Own, William," I said, smilingly, "that you were terribly hypped, and fancied you never could recover."

He looked relieved as I spoke thus lightly. "I should find it sad

to die," he said. "Life looks bright to me even yet."

This man was a coward. He dreaded that struggle, that humiliation of spirit, through which all must pass ere peace with Heaven is achieved. Yet more, perhaps, he dreaded that deeper struggle which ensues when we essay to tear Self from its throne in the heart, and place God thereon. As he said, life looked bright to him; and all his plans and purposes in life were for himself, his own advancement, his own well-being. It would have been hard to make the change; and he thought it was not necessary now, at least.

No more was said upon the subject. Our days went on as before. There was a little music, some light reading, an occasional call from a friend,—and long pauses of rest between all these. And slowly, but surely, life failed, and the soul drew near its doom.

I knew now that he loved me still; he talked of it sometimes when he woke suddenly, and did not at once remember where he was; I saw it, too, in his look, his manner; but we never breathed it to each other, and he did not think I knew.

One night there was a great change; physicians were summoned in haste; there were hours of anxious watching. Toward morning he seemed a little better, and I was left alone with him. He slumbered quietly, but when he awoke there was a strange and solemn look in his face, such as I had never seen before. I knew what it must mean.

"When Dr. Hammond comes, let me see him alone," he

whispered.

I made no objection; nothing could frustrate my purpose now.

The physician came,—a kind old man, who had known us all from infancy. He was closeted awhile with William; then he came out, looking deeply moved.

"Go to him,—comfort him, if you can," he said.

"You have told him?" I asked.

"Yes,—he insisted upon hearing the truth, and I knew he had got where it could make no difference. Poor fellow! it was a terrible blow."

I wanted a few moments for reflection; I sent John in my stead. I locked myself in my own room, and tried to get the full weight of what I was going to do. I was about to meet him who had rejected my heart's best love, no longer in the flush and insolence of health and strength, but doomed, dying,—with a dark, hopeless eternity stretching out before his shuddering gaze. And when he turned to me in those last awful moments for solace and affection, I was to tell him that the girl he loved, the woman he adored, had since that one night kept the purpose of vengeance hot in her heart,—that for years her sole study had been to baffle and to wound him,—and that now, through all those months that she had been beside him, that he had looked to her as friend, helper, comforter, she had kept her deadly aim in view. *She* had deceived him with false hopes of recovery; *she* had turned again to the world the thoughts which he would fain have fixed on heaven; while he was loving her, she had hated him. She

had darkened his life; she had ruined his soul.

Oh, was not this a revenge worthy of the name?

I went to him. He was sitting in the great easy-chair, propped with pillows; John had left the room, overcome by his feelings. Never shall I forget that face,—the despair of those eyes.

I sat down by him and took his hand.

"The Doctor has told you?" I murmured.

"Yes,—and what is this world which I so soon must enter? I believe too much to have one moment's peace in view of what is coming. Oh, why did I not believe more before it was too late?"

I kept silence a few minutes; then I said,—

"Listen, William,—I have something to tell you."

He looked eagerly toward me;—perhaps he thought even then, poor dupe, that it was some word of hope, that there was some chance for his recovery.

Then I told him all,—all,—my lifelong hatred, my cherished purpose. Blank amazement was in the gaze that he turned upon me. I feared that impending death had blunted his senses, and that he did not fully comprehend.

"You will remember now what I once told you," I cried, with savage joy; "for so surely as there is another world, in that world shall you live, and live to suffer, and to remember in your anguish why you suffer, and to whose hand you owe it."

He understood well enough now. "Fiend!" he exclaimed, with a look of horror, and started to his feet. The effort, the emotion, were too much. Blood gushed from his lips; a frightful spasm

convulsed his features; he fell back; he was gone!

Yes,—he was gone! And my life's work was complete!

I cannot tell what happened after that. I suppose they must have found him, and laid him out, and buried him; but I remember nothing of it. Since then I have lived in this great, gloomy house, with its barred doors and windows. Never since I came here have I seen a face that I knew. Maniacs are all about me; I meet them in the halls, the gardens; sometimes I hear the fiercer sort raving and dashing about their cells. But I do not feel afraid of them.

It is strange how they all fancy that the rest are mad, and they the only sane ones. Some of them even go so far as to think that *I* have lost my reason. I heard one woman say, not long ago, —"Why, she has been mad these twenty years! She never was married in her life; but she believes all these things as if they were really so, and tells them over to anybody who will listen to her."

Mad these twenty years! So young as I am, too! And I never married, and all my wrongs a maniac's raving! I was angry at first, and would have struck her; then I thought, "Poor thing! Why should I care? She does not know what she is saying."

And I go about, seeing always before me that pallid, horror-stricken face; and wishing sometimes—oh, how vainly!—that I had listened to him that bright October day,—that I had been a happy wife, perchance a happy mother. But no, no! I must not think thus. Once I look at it in that way, my whole life becomes a terror, a remorse. I will not, must not, have it so.

Then let me rejoice again, for I have had my revenge,—a great, a glorious revenge!

* * * * *

LEFT BEHIND

It was the autumn of the year;
The strawberry-leaves were red and sere;
October's airs were fresh and chill,
When, pausing on the windy hill,
The hill that overlooks the sea,
You talked confidingly to me,
Me, whom your keen artistic sight
Has not yet learned to read aright,
Since I have veiled my heart from you,
And loved you better than you knew.

You told me of your toilsome past,
The tardy honors won at last,
The trials borne, the conquests gained,
The longed-for boon of Fame attained:
I knew that every victory
But lifted you away from me,—
That every step of high emprise
But left me lowlier in your eyes;
I watched the distance as it grew,
And loved you better than you knew.

You did not see the bitter trace
Of anguish sweep across my face;
You did not hear my proud heart beat

Heavy and slow beneath your feet;
You thought of triumphs still unwon,
Of glorious deeds as yet undone;—
And I, the while you talked to me,
I watched the gulls float lonesomely
Till lost amid the hungry blue,
And loved you better than you knew.

You walk the sunny side of Fate;
The wise world smiles, and calls you great;
The golden fruitage of success
Drops at your feet in plenteousness;
And you have blessings manifold,—
Renown, and power, and friends, and gold;
They build a wall between us twain
Which may not be thrown down again;—
Alas! for I, the long years through,
Have loved you better than you knew.

Your life's proud aim, your art's high truth
Have kept the promise of your youth;
And while you won the crown which now
Breaks into bloom upon your brow,
My soul cried strongly out to you
Across the ocean's yearning blue,
While, unremembered and afar,
I watched you, as I watch a star
Through darkness struggling into view,
And loved you better than you knew.

I used to dream, in all these years,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.