VARIOUS

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OUR ARTISTS IN ITALY

HIRAM POWERS.

Antique Art, beside affording a standard by which the modern may be measured, has the remarkable property-giving it a higher value—of testing the genuineness of the Art-impulse.

Even to genius, that is, to the artist, a true Art-life is difficult of attainment. In the midst of illumination, there is the mystery: the subjective mystery, out of which issue the germs—like seeds floated from unknown shores—of his imaginings; the objective mystery, which yields to him, through obvious, yet unexplained harmonies, the means of manifestation.

Behind the consciousness is the power; behind the power, that which gives it worth and occupation.

To the artist definite foresight is denied. His life is full of surprises at new necessities. When the present demand shall have been fulfilled, what shall follow? Shall it be Madonna, or Laocoön? His errand is like that of the commander who bears sealed instructions; and he may drift for years, ere he knows wherefore. Thorwaldsen waited, wandering by the Tiber a thousand days,—then in one, uttered his immortal "Night."

Not even the severest self-examination will enable one in whom the Art-impulse exists to understand thoroughly its aim and uses; yet to approximate a clear perception of his own nature and that of the art to which he is called is one of his first duties. What he is able to do, required to do, and permitted to do, are questions of vital importance.

Possession of himself, of himself in the highest, will alone enable the student in Art to solve the difficulties of his position. His habitual consciousness must be made up of the noblest of all that has been revealed to it; otherwise those fine intuitions, akin to the ancient inspirations, through whose aid genius is informed of its privileges, are impossible.

Therefore the foremost purpose of an artist should be to claim and take possession of self. Somewhere within is his inheritance, and he must not be hindered of it. Other men have other gifts,—gifts bestowed under different conditions, and subject in a great degree to choice. Talent is not fastidious. It is an instrumentality, and its aim is optional with him who possesses it. Genius is exquisitely fastidious, and the man whom it possesses must live its life, or no life.

In view of these considerations, the efforts of an artist to assume his true position must be regarded with earnest interest, and importance must be attached to that which aids him in attaining to his true plane.

Such aid may be, and is, derived from the influences of Italy. Of those agencies which have a direct influence upon the action of the artist, which serve to assist him in manifesting his idea and fulfilling his purpose, mention will be made in connection with the works which have been produced in Italian studios. They have less importance than that great element related to the innermost of the artist's life,—to that power of which we have spoken, making Art-action necessary.

It is not, however, exclusively antique Art which exercises this power of elevation. Ancient Art may be a better term; as all great Art bears a like relation to the student. In Florence the mediaeval influences predominate. Rome exercises *its* power through the medium of the antique.

There is much Christian Art in Rome. Yet its effect is insignificant, compared with that of the vast collection of Greek sculptures to be found within its walls. Instinctively, as the vague yearnings and prophecies of youth lift him in whom they quicken away from youth's ordinary purposes and associations, his thought turns to that far city where are gathered the achievements of those who were indeed the gods of Hellas. To be there, and to demand from those eloquent lips the secret of the golden age, is his dream and aim, and there shall be solved the problem of his life.

But antique Art, waiting so patiently twenty centuries to afford aid to the artist, waits also to sit in judgment upon his worth and acts. Woe to him who cannot pass the ordeal of its power, and explain the enigma of its speech!

Nothing can be more pitiful and sad than the condition of one who, having been subjected to the influence of ancient Art, has not had the ability to recognize or the earnestness of purpose essential to the apprehension of the truths which it has for his soul instead of his hands. But if, through truthfulness of aim, and a sense of the divine nature of the errand to which he seems appointed, he reach the law of Art, then henceforth its pursuit becomes the sign of life; if the impulse bear him no farther than rules, then all he produces goes forth as a proclamation of death. There is no middle path. Art is high or low: high, if it be the profoundest life of an earnest man, uttering itself in the *real*, even though it be awkwardly, and in violation of all accepted methods of expression; low, if it be not such utterance, even though consummate in obedience to the finest rules of all Art-science. There can be no other way. The life is in the man, and not in the stone; and no affectation of vitality can atone for the absence of that soul which should have been breathed into existence from his own divine life.

As was said, possession of self is the only condition under which the quantity and quality of the Art-impulse may be determined. It is only when a man stands face to face with himself, in the stillness of his own inner world, that his possibilities become apparent; and it is only when conscious of these, and inspired by a just sense of their dignity, that he can achieve that which shall be genuine success. *Once* he must be lifted away and isolated from worldly surroundings, relieved from all objective influences, from the pressure of all human relations; once the very memory of all these must be blotted out; once he must be alone. This is possible to a Mendelssohn in the awful solitude of Beethoven's "Sonate Pathétique," to a painter in the presence of Leonardo's "Last Supper," and to a sculptor in the hushed halls of the Vatican.

But that which lifts the true artist above externals, the externals of his own individual being, crushes the false, to whom the marble and the paint are in themselves the ultimate.

This train of thought has been suggested by the fact of the dominion which classic Art has acquired over sculptors, and by the influence of the sixteenth and seventeenth century schools upon painters. It is due, however, to our sculptors in Italy that credit should be given them for having resisted the influence of forms, of the mere letter of the classic, to a greater extent than the students of any other nation. Whether or not they have been receptive of the spirit of the antique remains to be seen.

American painters have been less fortunate. Too often the lessons of the old masters, and especially those of the earliest, the Puritan Fathers of Art, have been unheeded; or the rules and practices which served them temporarily, subject to the phase of the ideal for the time uppermost, have passed into permanent laws, to be obeyed under all conditions of Art-utterance.

The United States have had within the last twenty years as many as thirty sculptors and painters resident in Italy. At the beginning of the present year ten sculpture studios in Rome and Florence were occupied by Americans. We will speak of these artists in the order in which they entered the profession of an art which they have served to develop in this first period of its history in America. The eldest bears the honored name of Hiram Powers.

Three parties have been remarkably unjust to this man,—namely, his friends, his enemies, and himself.

Neither the artist nor his friends need feel solicitude for his fame. The exact value of his excellence shall be estimated, and the height of his genius fully recognized, when the right man comes.

Other award than that from an age on a level with his own life can be of small worth to one who has attained to the true level of Art. Fame must come to him of that vision which can pierce the external of his work and penetrate to the presence of his very soul. His action must be traced to its finest ideal motive,—as chemist-philosophers pursue the steps of analysis until opaque matter is resolved to pure, ethereal elements. His fame must be from such vision, and it will approach the universal just in proportion as his pulse beats in unison with the heart of mankind. Whatever may be an artist's plans, or those of his friends, in regard to his valuation by the world, while he is living, ultimately he himself, divested of all save his own individuality, must stand revealed.

Those who in other departments of action are necessarily governed somewhat, or it may be entirely, by rules of conduct general in nature and universal in application, may fail to receive or may escape justice. They are to a great degree involuntary agents, and subject to the laws of science, to the operations of which they are obliged to conform. The private fact of the man is hidden by the public general truth. If, however, the energies of the individual overtop the science, enabling him to assert himself above the summit of its history, then is he accessible to all generations, and can in no wise avoid or forfeit his just fame.

In Art, this intimate relation of the result of action to the actor is complete,—inasmuch as, to *be* Art, to rise above being something else, the shadow and mockery of Art, it must be of and from the man, a spontaneity, a reflection, light for light, shade for shade, color for color, of his entire being; and with this effect his will has little to do. Therefore, unless he be an impostor, he need give himself no trouble regarding his future. His works shall serve as a clue, produced century after century, along which posterity shall feel its way back to his studio and heart. No need of thought for *his* morrow.

But for his to-day he may well be solicitous. If fame be his reflection, he has also the shadow of himself, his reputation.

It is a great error to assume that these two effects are so related that the augmentation of the one must increase the other, and as great a mistake to confound the two. The truth is, that reputation and fame are rarely coincident. They are not unfrequently in direct opposition,—so much so, that some names, which the world cannot give up, have to be filtered through a thick mass of years, to purify them of their reputations, and leave them simply famous.

No name has suffered more than that of Powers. His friends, blind to the laws which govern these matters, have wrought bravely to construct for him a reputation commensurate with his vaguely imagined worth; but upon his real worth they have evinced no desire to lay their foundation. No accurate survey has been made of his abilities, no definite plan of his artist-nature. Often a place has been demanded for his name in the history of Art, and the first place too, because of his fine frank eye, or the simplicity of his manners,—because his workmen cut the chain of the Greek slave out of one piece of stone, or the marble of the statue itself had no spot as big as a pin-head,—because he himself chooses to rasp and scrape plaster, rather than model in plastic clay,—because he tinkered up the "infernal regions" of the Cincinnati Museum years ago, or spends his time now in making perforating-machines and perforated files; in fine, for *any* reason rather than for the right legitimate one of artistic merit, they have demanded room for their favorite.

Even those who look deeper than this, appreciating Mr. Powers as a gentleman, an ingenious mechanic, and a skillful manipulator in sculpture, have been content or constrained to urge his claims to attention upon false considerations. We have heard it gravely remarked, as a matter of astonishment, that there were individuals—refined men, apparently—who looked upon the Venus de' Medici as a finer work than the Greek Slave. In the files of a New York paper may be found an article, written by a highly cultivated man, in which Powers's busts are asserted to be rather the effect of miracles than the results of *human* effort. The spirit which has prompted these and many kindred expressions cannot be too much deplored by those who love Art and know the artist. It has succeeded in creating for him a reputation broad and remarkable, but most unfortunate, because not his own, because not the reputation which should have formed about his name here, as fame will yonder; unfortunate,

because, though broad, it is the breadth of an inverted pyramid, which must naturally topple over of itself, and incumber his path with ruins.

The false position in which Mr. Powers has been placed by his friends has of course won him many enemies.

Bold, sincere, working enemies are highly useful in developing an artist's character, especially if he be a law-abiding follower of the art. But enemies must be dealers of fair blows, wagers of honorable warfare; no assassin is worthy of the name of enemy. Sometimes, however, those who are worthy of the name, and entitled to respect, may make injudicious and unfair use of censure and invective. It is unwise, when the necessity arises to set aside a worthless or an imperfect image, to turn Iconoclast and demolish those surrounding it which are worthy of a place in the temple. True criticism, for its own sake, if prompted by no higher motive, deals justly.

The friends of Mr. Powers have, in their estimate of his ability, given him credit for that which he does not possess, and claimed recognition for merit unsupported by the value of his works. His enemies have labored assiduously, not only to deprive the estimate of its unwarranted quantity, but to overthrow the whole, and leave him merely a mechanic, a dexterous mechanic, with small views, but large ambition, trying to pass himself off as an artist. His busts are asserted to be but more elaborate examples of his skill in the "perforated-file-and-patent-punch" line.

But as the struggles to elevate this artist's reputation above its proper level have proved signal failures, so the effort to depreciate it must ultimately be defeated. Only one kind of injustice ever proves irreparable wrong: that which a man exercises towards himself. Mr. Powers *had* a specialty.

So constituted that the most difficult executive operations are to him but play and pleasure, he has also, to govern and inform this rare organization, a broad, manly, and most genial human nature. This combination decided the question of his proper mission, and in virtue of it he has been enabled to model a series of most remarkable busts, the true excellence of which must be recognized in spite of friends and foes, and the epithets "miraculous" and "mechanical."

It is possible that the highest type of portrait-sculpture is beyond the limit of this specialty; indeed, it is almost impossible that with the elements constituting it there should be associated the still rarer power to achieve the most exalted ideal Art; and such Art we believe the highest portraiture to be.

A consummate representation of a man in his divinest development, the last refined ideal of him *then*, would be indeed somewhat miraculous!

The world asks less. It claims to know of a man what the face of him became under the influences of human, temporal relations. It wants preserved of the statesman the statesman's face, of the merchant the merchant's face; and this demand, when governed by a cultivated taste, is a legitimate one,—as legitimate as is the demand for any history. The public requires the image of the man whom the public knew, and they regard as valuable that which can be received as a definite and trustworthy statement of a great man, or of one whom it esteemed great. It requires this, has a right to such information; and the generation which fails to demand of its artists a true record of its prominent men fails utterly in its duty. The bust of a man goes down to posterity, not only the history which it is in itself, but as an interpreter of the history of its age. Were it not for Art, an age would recede into the unknown, to be recorded as dark, or into the shadowy world of myth. Portraiture, more than aught else, serves to elucidate the tradition or story of a people. How impossible to explain to the twentieth century the bad mystery of our present, without the aid of Powers's head of Calhoun, the less adequate bust of Stephen A. Douglas, and the one which *should* be modelled of Mr. Buchanan! A faithful delineation of the features of some men is needful. We should be thankful for that black frown of Nero, for the bald pate of Scipio, for those queer eyes of Marius, and for the long neck of Cicero, as seen in the newly discovered bust. These are the signs of the men, and explain them.

Mr. Powers has succeeded in reporting more accurately than any other recent artist the physical facts of the individual face. From one of his marbles we derive definite ideas of the human character

of its subject, what its ambition is, and what its weakness; what have been its loves and its antipathies, its struggles and its victories, its joys and its sorrows, may be revealed to him who has learned what the human face becomes under the influence of these incessant forces. No mere *talent* can accomplish such results. Behind all that kind of strength lies the fact of peculiar sympathies, relating the artist to this phase of Art-representation; and within certain limits, which should have been undebatable, his rule was absolute.

The great mistake with Mr. Powers has been his oversight regarding these limits. There has been debate, hesitation, and a continual wandering away from the duties of his errand. Years have been devoted to those ghosts of sculpture, allegorical figures; other years wasted in the elaboration of machinery. Not that his ideal statues are worthless, or fall short of great beauty and exquisite delicacy; not that his skill as a mechanician is other than great. But the age cannot afford these things, nor can the sculptor afford them. A year is too great a sum to give for a statue of California. Better than that, the several portraits of valued men which might have been acquired,—one bust, even, like those which surprised and compelled the reverence of Thorwaldsen. Better the perfected ability which would have given his country the Webster he should and might have made than a hundred "Americas."

There are two considerations which may have misled Mr. Powers. One, a pecuniary one, which he should have disposed of as did Agassiz, when such was advanced to induce him to give lyceum lectures:—"Sir, I cannot afford to make money!" The other may have been the weight of the prevailing error that portrait-sculpture is a less honorable branch of Art.

Less than what? The historical? What finer history than Titian's Paul III., Raphael's Leo X., Albert Dürer's head of himself? What finer than the Pericles, the Marcus Aurelius of the Capitol, the Demosthenes of the Vatican, Chantrey's Scott, Houdon's Voltaire, Powers's Jackson?—Heroic? what more heroic than the Lateran Sophocles, the Venetian Colleoni, or Rauch's statue of Frederick the Great?—Poetical? What picture more sweetly poetical than Raphael's head of himself in the Uffizi, or Giotto's Dante in the Bargello? What *ideal* statue surpasses in poetical power Michel Angelo's De' Medici in the San Lorenzo Chapel? What ideal head is more beautiful than the Townley Clytie of the British Museum, or the Young Augustus of the Vatican? What grander than Da Vinci's portrait of himself?

No,—when the sculptor has wrought the adequate representation of the individual in its best estate, he may rest assured that he has achieved "high Art."

Let us not be unjust to Mr. Powers's ideal works. In the qualities of chasteness of conception, delicacy of treatment, temperate grace, and that rarer, finer quality of dignified repose, they have not been surpassed since the time of Greek Art. When the subject chosen has not been foreign to the artist's nature, as in the "Eve," nor foreign to the Art's province, as in the "California," his success has been very like a triumph.

But the success has not been that which he was entitled to grasp; the seeming triumph has precluded a real victory. We must believe that the highest lessons of ancient Art have, in a great measure, been unrecognized by Mr. Powers. The external has been studied. No man can talk more justly of that exquisite line of the Venus de' Medici's temple and cheek, or point out more discriminatingly the beauties of the Milo statue, or detect more quickly the truths of the antique busts. He has discovered, also, somewhat of the great secret of repose,—has perceived that it is essential, in some wise, to all greatness in Art, more particularly in his own department of sculpture. But beyond that simple recognition of the fact, what? That repose is dependent on power to act, and must be great in proportion to mightiness of power? No, he could not have seen this; else had his Webster come to us less questionable in intent, less remote in its merits from the massive self-possession of the man.

For what Mr. Powers became before he left America he cannot be praised too greatly. He carried with him to Europe just that knowledge of Nature and that executive power which prepared him to take advantage of the aid that all great Art was waiting to afford. Had he won "the large truth," he would have found the scope and purpose of his genius, as in America he had found that

of his talent. He would have seen his specialty to be worthy of all reverence, for he would have attained to an appreciation of the high possibilities of portrait-Art. There would have been developed, under the influence of great principles, the power to make *statues* of great men,—colossal, instead of big,—reposeful, instead of paralyzed,—grand, instead of arrogant,—statues worthy of the hand that wrought the busts of Calhoun, Jackson, and Webster, worthy to rank with the few mighty embodiments of power, the Sophocles, the Aristides, and the Demosthenes. This he might have done; and this he may yet accomplish.

THE AMBER GODS

STORY FIRST

Flower o' the Peach.

We've some splendid old point-lace in our family, yellow and fragrant, loose-meshed. It isn't every one has point at all; and of those who have, it isn't every one can afford to wear it. I can. Why? Oh, because it's in character. Besides, I admire point any way,—it's so becoming; and then, you see, this amber! Now what is in finer unison, this old point-lace, all tags and tangle and fibrous and bewildering, and this amber, to which Heaven knows how many centuries, maybe, with all their changes, brought perpetual particles of increase? I like yellow things, you see.

To begin at the beginning. My name, you're aware, is Giorgione Willoughby. Queer name for a girl! Yes; but before papa sowed his wild oats, he was one afternoon in Fiesole, looking over Florence nestled below, when some whim took him to go into a church there, a quiet place, full of twilight and one great picture, nobody within but a girl and her little slave,—the one watching her mistress, the other saying dreadfully devout prayers on an amber rosary, and of course she didn't see him, or didn't appear to. After he got there, he wondered what on earth he came for, it was so dark and poky, and he began to feel uncomfortably,—when all of a sudden a great ray of sunset dashed through the window, and drowned the place in the splendor of the illumined painting. Papa adores rich colors; and he might have been satiated here, except that such things make you want more. It was a Venus; —no, though, it couldn't have been a Venus in a church, could it? Well, then, a Magdalen, I guess, or a Madonna, or something. I fancy the man painted for himself, and christened for others. So, when I was born, some years afterward, papa, gratefully remembering this dazzling little vignette of his youth, was absurd enough to christen me Giorgione. That's how I came by my identity; but the folks all call me Yone,—a baby name.

I'm a blonde, you know,—none of your silver-washed things. I wouldn't give a *fico* for a girl with flaxen hair; she might as well be a wax doll, and have her eyes moved by a wire; besides, they've no souls. I imagine they were remnants at our creation, and somehow scrambled together, and managed to get up a little life among themselves; but it's good for nothing, and everybody sees through the pretence. They're glass chips, and brittle shavings, slender pinkish scrids,—no name for them; but just you say blonde, soft and slow and rolling,—it brings up a brilliant, golden vitality, all manner of white and torrid magnificences, and you see me! I've watched little bugs—gold rose-chafers—lie steeping in the sun, till every atom of them must have been searched with the warm radiance, and have felt, that, when they reached that point, I was just like them, golden all through,—not dyed, but created. Sunbeams like to follow me, I think. Now, when I stand in one before this glass, infiltrated with the rich tinge, don't I look like the spirit of it just stepped out for inspection? I seem to myself like the complete incarnation of light, full, bounteous, overflowing, and I wonder at and adore anything so beautiful; and the reflection grows finer and deeper while I gaze, till I dare not do so any longer. So, without more words, I'm a golden blonde. You see me now: not too tall,—five feet four; not slight, or I couldn't have such perfect roundings, such flexible moulding. Here's nothing of the spiny Diana and Pallas, but Clytie or Isis speaks in such delicious curves. It don't look like flesh and blood, does it? Can you possibly imagine it will ever change? Oh!

Now see the face,—not small, either; lips with no particular outline, but melting, and seeming as if they would stain yours, should you touch them. No matter about the rest, except the eyes. Do you meet such eyes often? You wouldn't open yours so, if you did. Note their color now, before the ray goes. Yellow hazel? Not a bit of it! Some folks say topaz, but they're fools. Nor sherry. There's a dark sardine base, but over it real seas of light, clear light; there isn't any positive color; and once when I

was angry, I caught a glimpse of them in a mirror, and they were quite white, perfectly colorless, only luminous. I looked like a fiend, and, you may be sure, recovered my temper directly,—easiest thing in the world, when you've motive enough. You see the pupil is small, and that gives more expansion and force to the irides; but sometimes in an evening, when I'm too gay, and a true damask settles in the cheek, the pupil grows larger and crowds out the light, and under these thick, brown lashes, these yellow-hazel eyes of yours, they are dusky and purple and deep with flashes, like pansies lit by fire-flies, and then common folks call them black. Be sure, I've never got such eyes for nothing, any more than this hair. That is Lucrezia Borgian, spun gold, and ought to take the world in its toils. I always wear these thick, riotous curls round my temples and face; but the great braids behind—oh, I'll uncoil them before my toilet is over.

Probably you felt all this before, but didn't know the secret of it. Now, the traits being brought out, you perceive nothing wanting; the thing is perfect, and you've a reason for it. Of course, with such an organization, I'm not nervous. Nervous! I should as soon fancy a dish of cream nervous. I am too rich for anything of the kind, permeated utterly with a rare golden calm. Girls always suggest little similitudes to me: there's that brunette beauty,—don't you taste mulled wine when you see her? and thinking of yourself, did you ever feel green tea? and find me in a crust of wild honey, the expressed essence of woods and flowers, with its sweet satiety?—no, that's too cloying. I'm a deal more like Mendelssohn's music,—what I know of it, for I can't distinguish tunes,—you wouldn't suspect it,—but full harmonics delight me as they do a wild beast; and so I'm like a certain adagio in B flat, that Papa likes.

There now! you're perfectly shocked to hear me go on so about myself; but you oughtn't to be. It isn't lawful for any one else, because praise is intrusion; but if the rose please to open her heart to the moth, what then? You know, too, I didn't make myself; it's no virtue to be so fair. Louise couldn't speak so of herself: first place, because it wouldn't be true; next place, she couldn't, if it were; and lastly, she made her beauty by growing a soul in her eyes, I suppose,—what you call good. I'm not good, of course; I wouldn't give a fig to be good. So it's not vanity. It's on a far grander scale; a splendid selfishness,—authorized, too; and papa and mamma brought me up to worship beauty,—and there's the fifth commandment, you know.

Dear me! you think I'm never coming to the point. Well, here's this rosary;—hand me the perfume-case first, please. Don't you love heavy fragrances, faint with sweetness, ravishing juices of odor, heliotropes, violets, water-lilies,—powerful attars and extracts, that snatch your soul off your lips? Couldn't you live on rich scents, if they tried to starve you? I could, or die on them: I don't know which would be best. There! there's the amber rosary! You needn't speak; look at it!

Bah! is that all you've got to say? Why, observe the thing; turn it over; hold it up to the window; count the beads,—long, oval, like some seaweed bulbs, each an amulet. See the tint; it's very old; like clots of sunshine,—aren't they? Now bring it near; see the carving, here corrugated, there faceted, now sculptured into hideous, tiny, heathen gods. You didn't notice that before! How difficult it must have been, when amber is so friable! Here's one with a chessboard on his back, and all his kings and queens and pawns slung round him. Here's another with a torch, a flaming torch, its fire pouring out inverted. They are grotesque enough;—but this, this is matchless: such a miniature woman, one hand grasping the round rock behind, while she looks down into some gulf, perhaps, beneath, and will let herself fall. Oh, you should see *her* with a magnifying-glass! You want to think of calm, satisfying death, a mere exhalation, a voluntary slipping into another element? There it is for you. They are all gods and goddesses. They are all here but one; I've lost one, the knot of all, the love of the thing. Well! wasn't it queer for a Catholic girl to have at prayer? Don't you wonder where she got it? Ah! but don't you wonder where I got it? I'll tell you.

Papa came in, one day, and with great mystery commenced unrolling, and unrolling, and throwing tissue papers on the floor, and scraps of colored wool; and Lu and I ran to him,—Lu stooping on her knees to look up, I bending over his hands to look down. It was so mysterious! I began to

suspect it was diamonds for me, but knew I never could wear them, and was dreadfully afraid that I was going to be tempted, when slowly, bead by bead, came out this amber necklace. Lu fairly screamed; as for me, I just drew breath after breath, without a word. Of course they were for me;—I reached my hands for them.

"Oh, wait!" said papa. "Yone or Lu?"

"Now how absurd, papa!" I exclaimed. "Such things for Lu!"

"Why not?" asked Lu,—rather faintly now, for she knew I always carried my point.

"The idea of you in amber, Lu! It's too foreign; no sympathy between you!"

"Stop, stop!" said papa. "You shan't crowd little Lu out of them. What do you want them for, Lu?"

"To wear," quavered Lu,—"like the balls the Roman ladies carried for coolness."

"Well, then, you ought to have them. What do you want them for, Yone?"

"Oh, if Lu's going to have them, I *don't* want them."

"But give a reason, child."

"Why, to wear, too,—to look at,—to have and to hold for better, for worse,—to say my prayers on," for a bright idea struck me, "to say my prayers on, like the Florence rosary." I knew that would finish the thing.

"Like the Florence rosary?" said papa, in a sleepy voice. "Why, this *is* the Florence rosary."

Of course, when we knew that, we were both more crazy to obtain it.

"Oh, Sir," just fluttered Lu, "where did you get it?"

"I got it; the question is, Who's to have it?"

"I must and will, potential and imperative," I exclaimed, quite on fire. "The nonsense of the thing! Girls with lucid eyes, like shadowy shallows in quick brooks, can wear crystallizations. As for me, I can wear only concretions and growths; emeralds and all their cousins would be shockingly inharmonious on me; but you know, Lu, how I use Indian spices, and scarlet and white berries and flowers, and little hearts and notions of beautiful copal that Rose carved for you,—and I can wear sandal-wood and ebony and pearls, and now this amber. But you, Lu, you can wear every kind of precious stone, and you may have Aunt Willoughby's rubies that she promised me; they are all in tone with you; but I must have this."

"I don't think you're right," said Louise, rather soberly. "You strip yourself of great advantages. But about the rubies, I don't want anything so flaming, so you may keep them; and I don't care at all about this. I think, Sir, on the whole, they belong to Yone for her name."

"So they do," said papa. "But not to be bought off! That's my little

Lu!"

And somehow Lu, who had been holding the rosary, was sitting on papa's knee, as he half knelt on the floor, and the rosary was in my hand. And then he produced a little kid box, and there lay inside a star with a thread of gold for the forehead, circlets for wrist and throat, two drops, and a ring. Oh, such beauties! You've never seen them.

"The other one shall have these. Aren't you sorry, Yone?" he said.

"Oh, no, indeed! I'd much rather have mine, though these are splendid.

What are they?"

"Aqua-marina," sighed Lu, in an agony of admiration.

"Dear, dear! how did you know?"

Lu blushed, I saw,—but I was too much absorbed with the jewels to remark it.

"Oh, they are just like that ring on your hand! You don't want two rings alike," I said. "Where did you get that ring, Lu?"

But Lu had no senses for anything beyond the casket.

If you know aqua-marina, you know something that's before every other stone in the world. Why, it is as clear as light, white, limpid, dawn light; sparkles slightly and seldom; looks like pure

drops of water, sea-water, scooped up and falling down again; just a thought of its parent beryl green hovers round the edges; and it grows more lucent and sweet to the centre, and there you lose yourself in some dream of vast seas, a glory of unimagined oceans; and you say that it was crystallized to any slow flute-like tune, each speck of it floating into file with a musical grace, and carrying its sound with it. There! it's very fanciful, but I'm always feeling the tune in aqua-marina, and trying to find it,—but I shouldn't know it was a tune, if I did, I suppose. How magnificent it would be, if every atom of creation sprang up and said its one word of abracadabra, the secret of its existence, and fell silent again. Oh, dear! you'd die, you know; but what a pow-wow! Then, too, in aqua-marina proper, the setting is kept out of sight, and you have the unalloyed stone with its sea-rims and its clearness and steady sweetness. It wasn't the stone for Louise to wear; it belongs rather to highly-nervous, excitable persons; and Lu is as calm as I, only so different! There is something more pure and simple about it than about anything else; others may flash and twinkle, but this just glows with an unvarying power, is planetary and strong. It wears the moods of the sea, too: once in a while a warm amethystine mist suffuses it like a blush; sometimes a white morning fog breathes over it: you long to get into the heart of it. That's the charm of gems, after all! You feel that they are fashioned through dissimilar processes from yourself,—that there's a mystery about them, mastering which would be like mastering a new life, like having the freedom of other stars. I give them more personality than I would a great white spirit. I like amber that way, because I know how it was made, drinking the primeval weather, resinously beading each grain of its rare wood, and dripping with a plash to filter through and around the fallen cones below. In some former state I must have been a fly embalmed in amber.

"Oh, Lu!" I said, "this amber's just the thing for me, such a great noon creature! And as for you, you shall wear mamma's Mechlin and that aqua-marina; and you'll look like a mer-queen just issuing from the wine-dark deeps and glittering with shining water-spheres."

I never let Lu wear the point at all; she'd be ridiculous in it,—so flimsy and open and unreserved; that's for me;—Mechlin, with its whiter, closer, chaste web, suits her to a T.

I must tell you, first, how this rosary came about, any way. You know we've a million of ancestors, and one of them, my great-grandfather, was a sea-captain, and actually did bring home cargoes of slaves; but once he fetched to his wife a little islander, an Asian imp, six years old, and wilder than the wind. She spoke no word of English, and was full of short shouts and screeches, like a thing of the woods. My great-grandmother couldn't do a bit with her; she turned the house topsy-turvy, cut the noses out of the old portraits, and chewed the jewels out of the settings, killed the little home animals, spoiled the dinners, pranced in the garden with Madam Willoughby's farthingale and royal stiff brocades rustling yards behind,—this atom of a shrimp,—or balanced herself with her heels in the air over the curb of the well, scraped up the dead leaves under one corner of the house and fired them,—a favorite occupation,—and if you left her stirring a mess in the kitchen, you met her, perhaps, perched in the china-closet and mumbling all manner of demoniacal prayers, twisting and writhing and screaming over a string of amber gods that she had brought with her and always wore. When winter came and the first snow, she was furious, perfectly mad. One might as well have had a ball of fire in the house, or chain-lightning; every nice old custom had been invaded, the ancient quiet broken into a Bedlam of outlandish sounds, and as Captain Willoughby was returning, his wife packed the sprite off with him,—to cut, rip, and tear in New Holland, if she liked, but not in New England,—and rejoiced herself that she would find that little brown skin cuddled up in her best down beds and among her lavendered sheets no more. She had learned but two words all that time,—Willoughby, and the name of the town.

You may conjecture what heavenly peace came in when the Asian went out, but there is no one to tell what havoc was wrought on board ship; in fact, if there could have been such a thing as a witch, I should believe that imp sunk them, for a stray Levantine brig picked her—still agile as a monkey—from a wreck off the Cape de Verdes and carried her into Leghorn, where she took—will you mind,

if I say?—leg-bail, and escaped from durance. What happened on her wanderings I'm sure is of no consequence, till one night she turned up outside a Fiesolan villa, scorched with malaria fevers and shaken to pieces with tertian and quartan and all the rest of the agues. So, after having shaken almost to death, she decided upon getting well; all the effervescence was gone; she chose to remain with her beads in that family, a mysterious tame servant, faithful, jealous, indefatigable. But she never grew; at ninety she was of the height of a yard-stick,—and nothing could have been finer than to have a dwarf in those old palaces, you know.

In my great-grandmother's home, however, the tradition of the Asian sprite with her string of amber gods was handed down like a legend, and, no one knowing what had been, they framed many a wild picture of the Thing enchanting all her spirits from their beads about her, and calling and singing and whistling up the winds with them till storm rolled round the ship, and fierce fog and foam and drowning fell upon her capturers. But they all believed, that, snatched from the wreck into islands of Eastern archipelagoes, the vindictive child and her quieted gods might yet be found. Of course my father knew this, and when that night in the church he saw the girl saying such devout prayers on an amber rosary, with a demure black slave so tiny and so old behind her, it flashed back on him, and he would have spoken, if, just then, the ray had not revealed the great painting, so that he forgot all about it, and when at last he turned, they were gone. But my father had come back to America, had sat down quietly in his elder brother's house, among the hills where I am to live, and was thought to be a sedate young man and a good match, till a freak took him that he must go back and find that girl in Italy. How to do it, with no clue but an amber rosary? But do it he did, stationing himself against a pillar in that identical church and watching the worshippers, and not having long to wait before in she came, with little Asian behind. Papa isn't in the least romantic; he is one of those great fertilizing temperaments, golden hair and beard, and hazel eyes, if you will. He's a splendid old fellow! It's absurd to delight in one's father,—so bread-and-buttery,—but I can't help it. He's far stronger than I; none of the little weak Italian traits that streak me, like water in thick, syrupy wine. No,—he isn't in the least romantic, but he says he was fated to this step, and could no more have resisted than his heart could have refused to beat. When he spoke to the devotee, little Asian made sundry belligerent demonstrations; but he confronted her with the two words she had learned here, Willoughby and the town's name. The dwarf became livid, seemed always after haunted by a dreadful fear of him, pursued him with a rancorous hate, but could not hinder his marriage. The Willoughbys are a cruel race. Her only revenge was to take away the amber beads, which had long before been blessed by the Pope for her young mistress, refusing herself to accompany my mother, and declaring that neither should her charms ever cross the water,—that all their blessing would be changed to banning, and that bane would burn the bearer, should the salt-sea spray again dash round them. But when, in process of Nature, the Asian died, —having become classic through her longevity, taking length of days for length of stature,—then the rosary belonged to mamma's sister, who by-and-by sent it, with a parcel of other things, to papa for me. So I should have had it at all events, you see;—papa is such a tease I The other things were mamma's wedding-veil, that point there, which once was her mother's, and some pearls.

I was born upon the sea, in a calm, far out of sight of land, under sweltering suns; so, you know, I'm a cosmopolite, and have a right to all my fantasies. Not that they are fantasies at all; on the contrary, they are parts of my nature, and I couldn't be what I am without them, or have one and not have all. Some girls go picking and scraping odds and ends of ideas together, and by the time they are thirty get quite a bundle of whims and crotchets on their backs; but they are all at sixes and sevens, uneven and knotty like fagots, and won't lie compactly, don't belong to them, and anybody might surprise them out of them. But for me, you see, mine are harmonious, in my veins; I was born with them. Not that I was always what I am now. Oh, bless your heart! plums and nectarines, and luscious things that ripen and develop all their rare juices, were green once, and so was I. Awkward, tumble-about, near-sighted, till I was twenty, a real raw-head-and-bloody-bones to all society; then mamma, who was never well in our diving-bell atmosphere, was ordered to the West Indies, and papa said it

was what I needed, and I went, too,—and oh, how sea-sick! Were you ever? You forget all about who you are, and have a vague notion of being Universal Disease. I have heard of a kind of myopy that is biliousness, and when I reached the islands my sight was as clear as my skin; all that tropical luxuriance snatched me to itself at once, recognized me for kith and kin; and mamma died, and I lived. We had accidents between wind and water, enough to have made me considerate for others, Lu said; but I don't see that I'm any less careful not to have my bones spilt in the flood than ever I was. Slang? No,—poetry. But if your nature had such a wild, free tendency as mine, and then were boxed up with proprieties and civilities from year's end to year's end, may-be you, too, would escape now and then in a bit of slang.

We always had a little boy to play with, Lu and I, or rather Lu,—because, though he never took any dislike to me, he was absurdly indifferent, while he followed Lu about with a painful devotion. I didn't care, didn't know; and as I grew up and grew awkwarder, I was the plague of their little lives. If Lu had been my sister instead of my orphan cousin, as mamma was perpetually holding up to me, I should have bothered them twenty times more; but when I got larger and began to be really distasteful to his fine artistic perception, mamma had the sense to keep me out of his way; and he was busy at his lessons, and didn't come so much. But Lu just fitted him then, from the time he daubed little adoring blotches of her face on every barn-door and paling, till when his scrap-book was full of her in all fancies and conceits, and he was old enough to go away and study Art. Then he came home occasionally, and always saw us; but I generally contrived, on such occasions, to do some frightful thing that shocked every nerve he had, and he avoided me instinctively as he would an electric torpedo; but—do you believe?—I never had an idea of such a thing, till, when sailing from the South, so changed, I remembered things, and felt intuitively how it must have been. Shortly after I went away, he visited Europe. I had been at home a year, and now we heard he had returned; so for two years he hadn't seen me. He had written a great deal to Lu,—brotherly letters they were,—he is so peculiar,—determining not to give her the least intimation of what he felt, if he did feel anything, till he was able to say all. And now he had earned for himself a certain fame, a promise of greater; his works sold; and if he pleased, he could marry. I merely presume this might have been his thought; he never told me. A certain fame! But that's nothing to what he will have. How can he paint gray, faint, half-alive things now? He must abound in color,—be rich, exhaustless: wild sea-sketches,—sunrise,—sunset,—mountain mists rolling in turbid crimson masses, breaking in a milky spray of vapor round lofty peaks, and letting out lonely glimpses of a melancholy moon,—South American splendors,—pomps of fruit and blossom,—all this affluence of his future life must flash from his pencils now. Not that he will paint again directly. Do you suppose it possible that I should be given him merely for a phase of wealth and light and color, and then taken,—taken, in some dreadful way, to teach him the necessary and inevitable result of such extravagant luxuriance? It makes me shiver.

It was that very noon when papa brought in the amber, that he came for the first time since his return from Europe. He hadn't met Lu before. I ran, because I was in my morning wrapper. Don't you see it there, that cream-colored, undyed silk, with the dear palms and ferns swimming all over it? And all my hair was just flung into a little black net that Lu had made me; we both had run down as we were when we heard papa. I scampered; but he saw only Lu; and grasped her hands. Then, of course, I stopped on the baluster to look. They didn't say anything, only seemed to be reading up for the two years in each other's eyes; but Lu dropped her kid box, and as he stooped to pick it up, he held it, and then took out the ring, looked at her and smiled, and put it on his own finger. The one she had always worn was no more a mystery. He has such little hands! they don't seem made for anything but slender crayons and watercolors, as if oils would weigh them down with the pigment; but there is a nervy strength about them that could almost bend an ash.

Papa's breezy voice blew through the room next minute, welcoming him; and then he told Lu to put up her jewels, and order luncheon, at which, of course, the other wanted to see the jewels nearer;

and I couldn't stand that, but slipped down and walked right in, lifting my amber, and saying, "Oh, but this is what you must look at!"

He turned, somewhat slowly, with such a lovely indifference, and let his eyes idly drop on me. He didn't look at the amber at all; he didn't look at me; I seemed to fill his gaze without any action from him, for he stood quiet and passive; my voice, too, seemed to wrap him in a dream,—only an instant; though then I had reached him.

"You've not forgotten Yone," said papa, "who went persimmon and came apricot?"

"I've not forgotten Yone," answered he, as if half asleep. "But who is this?"

"Who is this?" echoed papa. "Why, this is my great West Indian magnolia, my Cleopatra in light colors, my"–

"Hush, you silly man!"

"This is she," putting his hands on my shoulders,—"Miss Giorgione
Willoughby."

By this time he had found his manners.

"Miss Giorgione Willoughby," he said, with a cool bow, "I never knew you."

"Very well, Sir," I retorted. "Now you and my father have settled the question, know my amber!" and lifting it again, it got caught in that curl.

I have good right to love my hair. What was there to do, when it snarled in deeper every minute, but for him to help me? and then, at the friction of our hands, the beads gave out slightly their pungent smell that breathes all through the Arabian Nights, you know; and the perfumed curls were brushing softly over his fingers, and I a little vexed and flushed as the blind blew back and let in the sunshine and a roistering wind;—why, it was all a pretty scene, to be felt then and remembered afterward. Lu, I believe, saw at that instant how it would be, and moved away to do as papa had asked; but no thought of it came to me.

"Well, if you can't clear the tangle," I said, "you can see the beads."

But while with delight he examined their curious fretting, he yet saw me.

I am used to admiration now, certainly; it is my food; without it I should die of inanition; but do you suppose I care any more for those who give it to me than a Chinese idol does for—whoever swings incense before it? Are you devoted to your butcher and milkman? We desire only the unpossessed or unattainable, "something afar from the sphere of our sorrow." But, though unconsciously, I may have been piqued by this manner of his. It was new; not a word, not a glance; I believed it was carelessness, and resolved—merely for the sake of conquering, I fancied, too—to change all that. By-and-by the beads dropped out of the curl, as if they had been possessed of mischief and had held there of themselves. He caught them.

"Here, Circe," he said.

That was the time I was so angry; for, at the second, he meant all it comprehended. He saw, I suppose, for he added at once,—

"Or what was the name of the Witch of Atlas,

> 'The magic circle of whose voice and eyes
> All savage natures did imparadise?'"

I wonder what made me think him mocking me. Frequently since then he has called me by that name.

"I don't know much about geography," I said. "Besides, these didn't come from there. Little Asian—the imp of my name, you remember—owned them."

"Ah?" with the utmost apathy; and turning to my father, "I saw the painting that enslaved you, Sir," he said.

"Yes, yes," said papa, gleefully. "And then why didn't you make me a copy?"

"Why?" Here he glanced round the room, as if he weren't thinking at all of the matter in hand. "The coloring is more than one can describe, though faded. But I don't think you would like it so much now. Moreover, Sir, I cannot make copies."

I stepped towards them, quite forgetful of my pride. "Can't?" I exclaimed. "Oh, how splendid! Because then no other man comes between you and Nature; your ideal hangs before you, and special glimpses open and shut on you, glimpses which copyists never obtain."

"I don't think you are right," he said, coldly, his hands loosely crossed behind him, leaning on the corner of the mantel, and looking unconcernedly out of the window.

Wasn't it provoking? I remembered myself,—and remembered, too, that I never had made a real exertion to procure anything, and it wasn't worth while to begin then, beside not being my forte; things must come to me. Just then Lu reentered, and one of the servants brought a tray, and we had lunch. Then our visitor rose to go.

"No, no," said papa. "Stay the day out with the girls. It's Mayday, and there are to be fireworks on the other bank to-night."

"Fireworks for Mayday?"

"Yes, to be sure. Wait and see."

"It would be so pleasant!" pleaded Lu.

"And a band, I forgot to mention. I have an engagement myself, so you'll excuse me; but the girls will do the honors, and I shall meet you at dinner."

So it was arranged. Papa went out. I curled up on a lounge,—for Lu wouldn't have liked to be left, if I had liked to leave her,—and soon, when he sat down by her quite across the room, I half shut my eyes and pretended to sleep. He began to turn over her work-basket, taking up her thimble, snipping at the thread with her scissors: I see now he wasn't thinking about it, and was trying to recover what he considered a proper state of feeling, but I fancied he was very gentle and tender, though I couldn't hear what they said, and I never took the trouble to listen in my life. In about five minutes I was tired of this playing 'possum, and took my observations.

What is your idea of a Louise? Mine is dark eyes, dark hair, decided features, pale, brown pale, with a mole on the left cheek,—and that's Louise. Nothing striking, but pure and clear, and growing always better.

For him,—he's not one of those cliff-like men against whom you are blown as a feather, I don't fancy that kind; I can stand of myself, rule myself. He isn't small, though; no, he's tall enough, but all his frame is delicate, held to earth by nothing but the cords of a strong will, —very little body, very much soul. He, too, is pale, and has dark eyes with violet darks in them. You don't call him beautiful in the least, but you don't know him. I call him beauty itself, and I know him thoroughly. A stranger might have thought, when I spoke of those copals Rose carved, that Rose was some girl. But though he has a feminine sensibility, like Correggio or Schubert, nobody could call him womanish. "*Les races se féminisent.*" Don't you remember Matthew Roydon's Astrophill?

> "A sweet, attractive kind of grace,
> A full assurance given by looks,
> Continual comfort in a face."

I always think of that flame in an alabaster vase, when I see him; "one sweet grace fed still with one sweet mind"; a countenance of another sphere: that's Vaughan Rose. It provokes me that I can't paint him myself, without other folk's words; but you see there's no natural image of him in me, and so I can't throw it strongly on any canvas. As for his manners, you've seen them;—now tell me, was there ever anything so winning when he pleases, and always a most gracious courtesy in his air, even when saying an insufferably uncivil thing? He has an art, a science, of putting the unpleasant out of his sight, ignoring or looking over it, which sometimes gives him an absent way; and that is

because he so delights in beauty; he seems to have woven a mist over his face then, and to be shut in on his own inner loveliness; and many a woman thinks he is perfectly devoted, when, very like, he is swinging over some lonely Spanish sierra beneath the stars, or buried in noonday Brazilian forests, half stifled with the fancied breath of every gorgeous blossom of the zone. Till this time, it had been the perfection of form rather than tint that had enthralled him; he had come home with severe ideas, too severe; he needed me, you see.

But while looking at him and Lu, on that day, I didn't perceive half of this, only felt annoyed at their behavior, and let them feel that I was noticing them. There's nothing worse than that; it is a very upas-breath, it puts on the brakes, and of course a chill and a restraint overcame them till Mr. Dudley was announced.

"Dear! dear!" I exclaimed, getting upon my feet. "What ever shall we do, Lu? I'm not dressed for him." And while I stood, Mr. Dudley came in.

Mr. Dudley didn't seem to mind whether I was dressed in cobweb or sheet-iron; for he directed his looks and conversation so much to Lu, that Rose came and sat on a stool before me and began to talk.

"Miss Willoughby"—

"Yone, please."

"But you are not Yone."

"Well, just as you choose. You were going to say?"

"Merely to ask how you liked the Islands."

"Oh, well enough."

"No more?" he said. "They wouldn't have broken your spell so, if that had been all. Do you know I actually believe in enchantments now?"

I was indignant, but amused in spite of myself.

"Well," he continued, "why don't you say it? How impertinent am I? You won't? Why don't you laugh, then?"

"Dear me!" I replied. "You are so much on the 'subtle-souled-psychologist' line, that there's no need of my speaking at all."

"I can carry on all the dialogue? Then let *me* say how you liked the

Islands."

"I shall do no such thing. I liked the West Indies because there is life there; because the air is a firmament of balm, and you grow in it like a flower in the sun; because the fierce heat and panting winds wake and kindle all latent color, and fertilize every germ of delight that might sleep here forever. That's why I liked them; and you knew it just as well before as now."

"Yes; but I wanted to see if you knew it. So you think there is life there in that dead Atlantis."

"Life of the elements, rain, hail, fire, and snow."

"Snow thrice bolted by the northern blast, I fancy, by which time it becomes rather misty. Exaggerated snow."

"Everything there is an exaggeration. Coming here from England is like stepping out of a fog into an almost exhausted receiver; but you've no idea what light is, till you've been in those inland hills. You think a blue sky the perfection of bliss? When you see a white sky, a dome of colorless crystal, with purple swells of mountain heaving round you, and a wilderness of golden greens royally languid below, while stretches of a scarlet blaze, enough to ruin a weak constitution, flaunt from the rank vines that lace every thicket, and the whole world, and you with it, seems breaking into blossom, —why, then you know what light is and can do. The very wind there by day is bright, now faint, now stinging, and makes a low, wiry music through the loose sprays, as if they were tense harp-strings. Nothing startles; all is like a grand composition utterly wrought out. What a blessing it is that the blacks have been imported there,—their swarthiness is in such consonance!"

"No; the native race was in better consonance. You are so enthusiastic, it is pity you ever came away."

"Not at all. I didn't know anything about it till I came back."

"But a mere animal or vegetable life is not much. What was ever done in the tropics?"

"Almost all the world's history,—wasn't it?"

"No, indeed; only the first, most trifling, and barbarian movements."

"At all events, you are full of blessedness in those climates, and that is the end and aim of all action; and if Nature will do it for you, there is no need of your interference. It is much better to be than to do;—one is a strife, the other is possession."

"You mean being as the complete attainment? There is only one Being, then. All the rest of us are"–

"Oh, dear me! that sounds like metaphysics! Don't!"

"So you see, you are not full of blessedness there."

"You ought to have been born in Abelard's time,—you've such a disputatious spirit. That's I don't know how many times you have contradicted me to-day."

"Pardon."

"I wonder if you are so easy with all women."

"I don't know many."

"I shall watch to see if you contradict Lu this way."

"I don't need. How absorbed she is! Mr. Dudley is 'interesting'?"

"I don't know. No. But then, Lu is a good girl, and he's her minister,—a Delphic oracle. She thinks the sun and moon set somewhere round Mr. Dudley. Oh! I mean to show him my amber."

And I tossed it into Lu's lap, saying,—

"Show it to Mr. Dudley, Lu,—and ask him if it isn't divine!"

Of course, he was shocked, and wouldn't go into ecstasies at all; tripped on the adjective.

"There are gods enough in it to be divine," said Rose, taking it from Lu's hand and bringing it back to me. "All those very Gnostic deities who assisted at Creation. You are not afraid that the imprisoned things work their spells upon you? The oracle declares it suits your cousin best," he added, in a lower tone.

"All the oaf knows!" I responded. "I wish you'd admire it, Mr. Dudley. Mr. Rose don't like amber,—handles it like nettles."

"No," said Rose, "I don't like amber."

"He prefers aqua-marina," I continued. "Lu, produce yours!" For she had not heard him.

"Yes," said Mr. Dudley, rubbing his finger over his lip while he gazed, "every one must prefer aqua-marina."

"Nonsense! It's no better than glass. I'd as soon wear a set of window-panes. There's no expression in it. It isn't alive, like real gems."

Mr. Dudley stared. Rose laughed.

"What a vindication of amber!" he said.

He was standing now, leaning against the mantel, just as he was before lunch. Lu looked at him and smiled.

"Yone is exultant, because we both wanted the beads," she said. "I like amber as much as she."

"Nothing near so much, Lu!"

"Why didn't you have them, then?" asked Rose, quickly.

"Oh, they belonged to Yone; and uncle gave me these, which I like better. Amber is warm, and smells of the earth; but this is cool and dewy, and"–

"Smells of heaven?" asked I, significantly.

Mr. Dudley began to fidget, for he saw no chance of finishing his exposition.

"As I was saying, Miss Louisa," he began, in a different key.

I took my beads and wound them round my wrist. "You haven't as much eye for color as a poppy-bee," I exclaimed, in a corresponding key, and looking up at Rose.

"Unjust. I was thinking then how entirely they suited you."

"Thank you. Vastly complimentary from one who 'don't like amber'!"

"Nevertheless, you think so."

"Yes and no. Why don't you like it?"

"You mustn't ask me for my reasons. It is not merely disagreeable, but hateful."

"And you've been beside me, like a Christian, all this time, and I had it!"

"The perfume is acrid; I associate it with the lower jaw of St. Basil the Great, styled a present of immense value, you remember,—being hard, heavy, shining like gold, the teeth yet in it, and with a smell more delightful than amber,"—making a mock shudder at the word.

"Oh, it is prejudice, then."

"Not in the least. It is antipathy. Besides, the thing is unnatural; there is no existent cause for it. A bit that turns up on certain sands,—here at home, for aught I know, as often as anywhere."

"Which means Nazareth. We must teach you, Sir, that there are some things at home as rare as those abroad."

"I am taught," he said, very low, and without looking up.

"Just tell me, what is amber?"

"Fossil gum."

"Can you say those words and not like it? Don't it bring to you a magnificent picture of the pristine world,—great seas and other skies,—a world of accentuated crises, that sloughed off age after age, and rose fresher from each plunge? Don't you see, or long to see, that mysterious magic tree out of whose pores oozed this fine solidified sunshine? What leaf did it have? what blossom? what great wind shivered its branches? Was it a giant on a lonely coast, or thick low growth blistered in ravines and dells? That's the witchery of amber,—that it *has* no cause,—that all the world grew to produce it,—may-be died and gave no other sign,—that its tree, which must have been beautiful, dropped all its fruits; and how bursting with juice must they have been"–

"Unfortunately, coniferous."

"Be quiet. Stripped itself of all its lush luxuriance, and left for a vestige only this little fester of its gashes."

"No, again," he once more interrupted. "I have seen remnants of the wood and bark in a museum."

"Or has it hidden and compressed all its secret here?" I continued, obliviously. "What if in some piece of amber an accidental seed were sealed, we found, and planted, and brought back the lost aeons? What a glorious world that must have been, where even the gum was so precious!"

"In a picture, yes. Necessary for this. But, my dear Miss Willoughby, you convince me that the Amber Witch founded your family," he said, having listened with an amused face. "Loveliest amber that ever the sorrowing sea-birds have wept," he hummed. "There! isn't that kind of stuff enough to make a man detest it?"

"Yes."

"And you are quite as bad in another way."

"Oh!"

"Just because, when we hold it in our hands, we hold also that furious epoch where rioted all monsters and poisons,—where death fecundated and life destroyed,—where superabundance demanded such existences, no souls, but fiercest animal fire;—just for that I hate it."

"Why, then, is it fitted for me?"

He laughed again, but replied,—"The hues harmonize,—the substances; you both are accidents; it suits your beauty."

So, then, it seemed I had beauty, after all.

"You mean that it harmonizes with me, because I am a symbol of its period. If there had been women then, they would have been like me,—a great creature without a soul, a"–

"Pray, don't finish the sentence. I can imagine that there is something rich and voluptuous and sating about amber, its color, and its lustre, and its scent; but for others, not for me. Yea, you have beauty, after all," turning suddenly, and withering me with his eye,—"beauty, after all, as you didn't *say* just now.—Mr. Willoughby is in the garden. I must go before he comes in, or he'll make me stay. There are some to whom you can't say, No."

He stopped a minute, and now, without looking,—indeed, he looked everywhere but at me, while we talked,—made a bow as if just seating me from a waltz, and, with his eyes and his smile on Louise all the way down the room, went out. Did you ever know such insolence?

SONG OF NATURE

Mine are the night and morning,
The pits of air, the gulf of space,
The sportive sun, the gibbous moon,
The innumerable days.

I hide in the blinding glory,
I lurk in the pealing song,
I rest on the pitch of the torrent,
In death, new-born and strong.

No numbers have counted my tallies,
No tribes my house can fill,
I sit by the shining Fount of life,
And pour the deluge still.

And ever by delicate powers
Gathering along the centuries
From race on race the fairest flowers,
My wreath shall nothing miss.

And many a thousand summers
My apples ripened well,
And light from meliorating stars
With firmer glory fell.

I wrote the past in characters
Of rock and fire the scroll,
The building in the coral sea,
The planting of the coal.

And thefts from satellites and rings
And broken stars I drew,
And out of spent and aged things
I formed the world anew.

What time the gods kept carnival,
Tricked out in star and flower,
And in cramp elf and saurian forms
They swathed their too much power.

Time and Thought were my surveyors,
They laid their courses well,
They boiled the sea, and baked the layers
Of granite, marl, and shell.

But him—the man-child glorious,
Where tarries he the while?
The rainbow shines his harbinger,
The sunset gleams his smile.

My boreal lights leap upward,
Forthright my planets roll,
And still the man-child is not born,
The summit of the whole.

Must time and tide forever run?
Will never my winds go sleep in the West?
Will never my wheels, which whirl the sun
And satellites, have rest?

Too much of donning and doffing,
Too slow the rainbow fades;
I weary of my robe of snow,
My leaves, and my cascades.

I tire of globes and races,
Too long the game is played;
What, without him, is summer's pomp,
Or winter's frozen shade?

I travail in pain for him,
My creatures travail and wait;
His couriers come by squadrons,
He comes not to the gate.

Twice I have moulded an image,
And thrice outstretched my hand,
Made one of day, and one of night,
And one of the salt-sea-sand.

I moulded kings and saviours,
And bards o'er kings to rule;
But fell the starry influence short,
The cup was never full.

Yet whirl the glowing wheels once more,
And mix the bowl again,
Seethe, Fate! the ancient elements,
Heat, cold, dry, wet, and peace and pain

Let war and trade and creeds and song
Blend, ripen race on race,—
The sunburnt world a man shall breed
Of all the zones and countless days.

No ray is dimmed, no atom worn,
My oldest force is good as new,
And the fresh rose on yonder thorn
Gives back the bending heavens in dew.

NEMOPHILY

An earnest plea was once entered in Maga's pages for the bodies of saints. Yet it is to be hoped that others not included in that respectable class may have physical needs also, and it is to be feared that they may not be above the necessity of a little of the same invigorating tonic. For there are not a few on this continent of ours, whom the *Avvocata del Diavolo* would certainly expect to enter a *nolo contendere*, who stand in much need of a healthy animalism. That these sinners would be benefited by what Mr. Kingsley's critics call "muscular Christianity" cannot be denied. For they are not sinners beyond all hope of amendment, by any means; and their offences being rather against the laws and light of Nature than against any of the commands of the Decalogue, it is earnestly desired that they be brought within the pale of promise, even if they never reach the sacred fane of canonization.

Indeed, at the outset, let there be a protest entered on behalf of the sinner against this unnecessary pity of the saint. It is a part of that false halo with which enthusiastic admiration (reckless of gilding and ruinously prodigal of ochre) delights to endue the favored heads of the *beati*. The saint himself countenances the folly, and meekly inclines his head (sideways) to the rays. It is a part of the capital of the calling to look interesting. The revered and reverend Charles Honeyman, in the hands of that acute manager, Mr. Sherrick, was bidden to sit in his pew at evening service and *cough*. A qualified consumption and a moderate bronchitis are no bad substitutes for eloquence, learning, and that indiscreet piety which is so careless of feminine favor as to bring into the pulpit a robust person and to the dinner-table a healthy appetite.

But the saint, if he have a reasonable sense of his pastoral duty, gets, *malgré lui*, a very fair share of that open-air medicine which is supposed to be the great lack of his profession. For if he be a clergyman in a rural parish of tolerable extent and with no great superfluity of wealth, he will not want for either air or exercise. The George Herbert so situated finds by no means his whole round of duty in the study. Old Mrs. Smith, sick and bedridden, lives a couple of miles from the parsonage; but the thoughtless creature actually expects a weekly visit and half-hour's reading of certain old familiar English literature, and will remind her pastor of it, if the expected day pass without his coming. Jones and his wife, who live in just the other direction, are wantonly apt, upon the insufficient plea of a long walk, to be missed from their wonted pew on a stormy Sunday, and must be looked up. Little Mary Gray has not been to Sunday-school. Cause suspected,—insufficient shoes. Bessy Bell, up the cross-road, quite over beyond Beman's Farms, is likewise delinquent, from the opposite want of a bonnet. Wilson, the cross-grained vestryman, has an idea, which never fails by Saturday night to break out into a positive rush of conviction, that the minister is neglecting his studies and "going to Rome," if he doesn't in the course of the week go to Wilson and carry him the Church papers and take a look at the Wilson prize-pigs. So good Mr. Herbert never fails, in due attestation of his "abhorrence of the Bishop of Rome and his detestable enormities," to foot it over the rocky hill and down across the rickety little bridge and past the poor-house farm, (where he stops on a little private business of his own, that perhaps makes a few old hearts and certainly one old coat-pocket the lighter,) and so on, a good piece, through the woods, to where Vestryman Wilson is bending over the hoe or swinging the axe, and thinking the while what an easy life the parson has of it.

Then Mr. Herbert gets the occasional tonic of a brisk walk over the hard-beaten snow, of a moonlight winter's night. A walk-only think of it!—over the crisp, crunching snow, to the distant outlying hamlet of Paton's Corner, where a few are gathered in the little school-house to hear him preach, and to give him the happy relief of a five-mile tramp home again.

It is really doubtful if dumb-bells, a gymnasium, and a pickerel-back racing-wherry would meet precisely the case of Mr. Herbert, however desirable for city saints who have plenty of spare sixpences for the omnibuses.

But the miserable sinner,—"where," as the shepherd exclaimed, to Mr. Weller's indignation, "is the miserable sinner?" Keeping school, keeping books, making books, standing behind counters when busy and on street-corners when disengaged, doing anything or everything but taking care of his precious body, and thereby giving his precious soul the chance of being in very bad company, and following the fate of poor Tray, and of the well-meaning stork in Dr. Aesop's fable. What shall he, or rather, what can he, do with his leisure? For leisure more or less almost every young man has,—and it is of young men, and especially of the *very* young men, that we are benevolently writing. If he dwell in an inland town, the boat-club is hopeless,—and boat-clubs, though capital things for the young gentlemen of Harvard and Yale and Trinity, have also their drawbacks. One cannot always be ready to move in complete unison with a dozen fellow-mortals. Pendennis is never ready when the club are desirous to row; Newcome is perpetually anxious to tempt the wave when the wave tempts nobody else. The gymnasium gets to be a wearisome round of very mill-horse-like work, after the varieties of possible dislocation of all one's bones have been exhausted. Climbing ropes and poles with nothing but cobwebs at the top, and leaping horses with only tan at the bottom, grow monotonous after six months' steady dissipation thereat. Base-ball clubs do not always find desirable commons, and the municipal fathers of the towns have a prejudice against them in the streets. What shall youth, conscious of muscle and eager for fresh air, do? Even the gloves are not fancy-free, but are very apt to bring with them the slang of the ring and the beastly associations of professional pugilism. Youth looks up to its teachers; but if its teachers in the manly art be the Game-Chicken, the Pet, the Slasher, youth, in learning to respect the brute strength of such men, will hardly learn to respect itself.

But—and here lies the purport of this article—there is hardly a town or village of New England which has not within a quarter of a mile of its suburbs a patch of woodland or a strip of sandy beach. What is to hinder the sinner, if he repent him of the foul air and cramped posture of which he has been the victim, from a little pedestrianism? Do American men and boys ever walk? Drive, it is known they do; they can always get time for that. But to walk, certainly to scramble and to climb, must be added by Mr. Phillips, in the new editions of his exquisite and inexhaustible Lecture, to the catalogue of the "Lost Arts."

Yet Nature never grows outworn,—is unwearied in the bounty which she bestows on the seeker. I said a strip of sandy beach, just now. For that I beg leave to refer the reader to Mr. Kingsley's fascinating "Glaucus," and to the delightful papers which appeared in "Blackwood" a year or two ago. My business is with the woods and fields. Certainly some who read my pages will have leisure to climb a stone wall now and then, and for them the following sketches of New England wood-walks may serve to show how much enjoyment may be got with but little outlay of appliances. Of course the most tempting thing to seek is sport. But the gun and the fishing-rod are useless in many towns, from the disappearance of all worthy objects for their exercise. The birds are wild and shy; the trout have been *coculus-indicused* out of the mountain-brooks to supply metropolitan hotel-tables and Delmonican larders. Let us go after more attainable things. And first, being a true nemophilist, I protest against botany. A flower worth a five-mile walk and a wet foot is worthy of something better than dissection with the Linnaean classification, afterward adding insult to injury. The botanist is not a discoverer; he is only a pedant. He finds out nothing about the plant; he serves it as we might fancy a monster doing, who should take this number of the "Atlantic" and sit down, not to read it, not to inhale the delicate fragrance of its thought, but to count its articles, examine their titles, and, having compared them with the newspaper advertisement, sweep the whole contentedly into the dust-heap. To study the plant, to see how it gets its living, why it will grow on one side of a brook in profusion, and yet refuse to seek the other bank, is not his care. It is simply to see whether he can abuse its honest English or New-English simplicity by calling it by one set or another of barbarous Latin and Greek titles. Pray, my good Sir, does a man go to see the elephant only to call him a pachydermatous quadruped?

But we are wasting time and shall never get into the woods. In the winter wild you will hardly get far into them, except at the Christmas season for greenery. Gathering this by deputy is poor business. It is all very well, if you can do no better, to engage Mr. Brown to engage some one else to bring in the needed spruce, fir, and hemlock with which to obscure the fresco deformities of St. Boniface's; but it is far better to hunt for them yourself. There is something intensely delightful in the changes of the search; for it begins dull enough. You start in the drear December weather, with a gray sky and leaden clouds softly shaded in regular billows, like an India-ink ocean, overhead, and a somewhat muddy lane before you. Then to pick one's way across the plashy meadows, and, after a ticklish pass of jumping from one reedy tussock to another, to get once more upon the firm soil, while the grass, dry and crisp under your feet, gives a pleasant *whish, whish*, as it does the duty of street-door-mat to your mud-beclogged sandals. Now for the stone wall. On the other side are thick set the thorny stalks of last summer's "high-bush" blackberries. A plunge and a scramble take you through in comparative safety; and stopping only to disengage your skirts from a too-fond bramble, you are in the woodland. Thick-strewn the dead leaves lie under foot. What music there is in the rustling murmur with which they greet your invading step! On, deeper and deeper into the wood,—now dodging under the green and snaky cat-briers, with their retractile thorns and vicious clinging grasp,—now dashing along the woodman's paths,—now struggling among the opposing underwood. At last a little sprig of feathery green catches the eye. It is a tuft of moss. No,—it is the running ground-pine; and clearing away, with both eager hands, leaves, sticks, moss, and all the fallen *exuciae* of the summertime, you tear up long wreaths of that most graceful of evergreens. Then, in another quarter of the woodland, where the underbrush has been killed by the denser shade, there rise the exquisite fan-shaped plumes of the feather-pine, of deepest green, or brown-golden with the pencil of the frost;—for cross or star or thick festoon, there is nothing so beautiful. And again you are attracted into the thickets of laurel, and wage fierce war upon the sturdy and tenacious, yet brittle branches, till you are transformed into a walking jack-o'-the-green. The holly of the English Christmas, all-besprent with crimson drops, is hard to be found in New England, and you will have to thread the courses of the brooks to seek the swamp-loving black alder, which will furnish as brilliant a berry, but without the beautiful thorny leaf. Only in one patch of woodland do I know of the holly. In the southeastern corner of Massachusetts,—if you will take the trouble to follow up a railroad-track for a couple of miles and then plunge into the pine woods, you will come upon a few lonely, stunted scraps of it. The warmer airs which the Gulf Stream sends upon that coast have, it is said, something to do therewith. Of course, if I am wrong, the botanists will take vengeance upon me; but I can only say what has been said to me. We nemophilists are apt to be careless of solemn science and go upon all sorts of uncertain tradition.

But "Christmas comes but once a year." After chancel and nave have been duly adorned, and again disrobed against the coming sobrieties of Lent, there are other temptations to the woods. Before the snow has wholly vanished from the shelter of the wood-lots, the warm, hazy, wooing days of April come upon us. On such a day,—how well in this snow-season I remember it!—I have been lured out by the hope of the Mayflower, the delicate *epigae repens*, miscalled the trailing arbutus. Up the rocky hill-side, from whose top you catch glimpses of the far-off sparkling sea, with a blue haze of island ranges belting it,—up among the rocks, into warm, sheltered, sunny nooks, you go upon your quest. For the Mayflower, though found in almost every township in New England, has secret and unaccountable whims of its own,—will persist in blooming in just one spot, where you ought not to expect it, and in avoiding all likely places. Yet when you come to its traditionary habitat, it is not there. Round and round we pace, hoping and despairing, till a faint, most delicate odor, indescribably suggestive of woodland freshness, catches the roused sense; or else one silvery star peeps out from under an upturned birch-leaf. Then down on hands and knees; tear up brush to right and left, the brown skeletons of the withered foliage. The ground is white with stars. Some are touched with delicate pink, some creamy white,—but all breathing out the evanescent secret of the early spring.

Such the children of Plymouth used to hang in garlands about the Pilgrim stone, in honor of the never-to-be-forgotten name of the New England Argo.

Later in the year come the beautiful blue violets, which are, I am sorry to say, scentless. Yet their little white cousin, which delights in all swampy places, is sometimes, in the first days of its appearing, more regardful of the prime duty of all flowers. I have gathered tufts of them which (botanists to the contrary notwithstanding) were wellnigh as odorous as if reared in the sunniest Warwickshire lane; but, as with a perfect specimen of the cast skin of a snake, such a boon is to be hoped for only once in a lifetime. With the violets, the beautiful blush-bells of the anemone come garlanded with their graceful leaves, plentifully enough. But did the rambler ever find the sensitive fern, which resented the intrusive hand with all Mimosa's coyness? I never did but once. I have wooed many a delicate frond of all varieties of fern since, but never one so conscious. Now, too, ere the trees come into leaf, is the time to seek the boxwood, called, I hope improperly, by the ominous name of the Southern dogwood. It is worth an afternoon's ramble to come upon one of those trees, standing in an open glade of the forest, a pyramid of white or cream-colored blossoms. Before a leaf is on the tree, it clothes itself in this lovely livery, and at a little distance seems like a snowy cloud rather than a shrub.

But with June comes the most exquisite of our New England wild-flowers, the arethusa, or swamp-pink, as it is often styled, to the great confusion of its delicate, high-born nature with the great, vulgar, flaunting azalea. When June comes,—when the clethra is heaped with its bee-beloved blossoms, and the grass is green and bright as never again in the year, then the arethusa is to be sought. A most unaccountable flower, of all shades, from pale pink to a deep purple, with a lovely shape that I can liken to nothing so nearly as the *fleur-de-lis* on French escutcheons, it has a delicate, yet powerful, aromatic scent, as if it were an estray from the tropics. One specimen, snowy white, I have seen, and can tell you where to find another. You are to go out along the President's highway, due northward from a certain seaport of Massachusetts. Take the eastward turn at the little village which lies at the head of its harbor, and so north again by the old Friends' meeting-house, which looks in brown placidity away toward the distant shipping and the wicked steeple-houses, into the which so many of its lost lambs have been inveigled. Then be not tempted to strike off down yonder lane, to see the curious old farm-house, relic of Colony times, with its odd stone chimney, its projecting upper story and carved wooden pendants, and its shingles all pierced into decorative hearts and rounds. Its likeness is not in Barber's book,—no, nor its visible form, I believe, (it is many a year since I went that way,) on earth. It became a constellation long ago,—being translated to the stars. Keep on with good heart along the highway ridge, whence you can look down on the solemn, close-set, pine forest, which hides from you the windings of the river, and the beautiful lakelet, where the water-lilies float in the summer. Go on down the valley, past the old tavern,—relic of stage-coaching days, the square, three-story, deserted-looking tavern,—up again a couple of miles or so, till the river has dwindled to a brook and then to a marsh. Here is the place of our seeking. For under the shade of one of those huge granite rocks over which the thin soil of – County is sprinkled, and which here and there have shaken off the superincumbent dust in indignation at the presumption of man in attempting to farm them,—under that rock—of course I shall not tell you which—you will find the White Arethusa, if you are born under a lucky star.

A little later, the crimson lady-slipper loves to spring up in pine clearings, around the base of the wood-piles which the cutters have stacked in the winter to season. To one born by the salt water there is an especial forest delight in the pine woods. For that best-loved sound of the ceaseless fall of plunging seas upon the beach comes to him there. Many a time I have walked from Harvard's leafy shades and cheerful halls out to the quiet of the Botanic Garden for the sake of hearing the wind in the pine tree-tops. Shut your eyes, and the inward vision sees once more the long line of sandy and shingly beaches, the green curving-up of the surges tipped with dazzling foam,—sees the motionless and blackened timbers of the wreck on the shore, the white wings dipping and turning along the combing tops of the waves racing in upon the sands,—sees the dry tufted beach-grass, and the wet,

shining, compact slope down which slides swiftly the under-tow. And what a healthful exhilaration it is to breathe the balm-laden breath of the pine forest, and to tread the elastic slippery-soft carpet of the fallen spiny leaves! Here is the haunt of the lady-slipper, (*cypripedium*,) a shy, rare flower, like a little sack delicately veined, with a faint musky scent, and large-flapped leaves shading its flower.

In the hot July and August, the scarlet lobelia, the cardinal-flower, is to be found. Never was cardinal so robed. If Herbert's rose, in poetic hyperbole, with its "hue angry and brave, bids the rash gazer wipe his eye," certainly such a bed of lobelia as I once saw on the road to "Rollo's Camp" was anything but what the Scotch would call "a sight for sair een." For the space of a dozen or twenty yards grew a patch of absolutely nothing but lobelia. At a little distance it was like a scarlet carpet flung out by the roadside. If you desire to twine the threefold chord of color, as Mr. Ruskin calls it, I know of no lovelier foil for the lobelia than the white orchis, which haunts the same marshy spots. Those long spikes of feathery and balanced blossoms are the most absolute white of anything in Nature. They positively insist upon the very refinement of purity, as you look at them.

Did you ever see a pond-lily?—not the miserable draggled green-and-mud-colored buds which enterprising boys bring into the cars for sale; but the white water-lily, floating on the silent brooks, or far out in the safe depths of the mill-ponds. The "Autocrat" knows what pond-lilies are, having visited Prospero's Isle and seen the pink-tinged sisterhood of a certain mere that lies embosomed in its hills. But to know them, you must hunt for them,—tramp off to the distant stream, and then, not stand on the bank and wish and sigh, but off hose and shoon, and, careless of water-snake and snapping-turtle, wade in up to their virgin bower, and bear off the dripping, fragrant prize. None but the brave deserve—lady or lily.

But if the stream be too deep and wide, and the lilies are anchored far out among their broad pads,—a floral Venice, with the blue spikes and arrowy leaves of the pickerel-weed for campaniles and towers,—there are yet "lilies of the field" over which you may profitably meditate, remembering that Solomon Ben-David was not so arrayed. Two kinds there are,—one like the tiger-lily of the gardens, the petals curled back and showing the whole leopard-spotted corolla,—the other bell-shaped, rarer, and growing one only on a stalk. Both are to be found in open spaces, bush-grown fields, and airy, sunny spots. It is worth a hot and dusty June walk to get into one of those nooks. You can spend days and not exhaust the study which one little triangular bit of overgrown pasture affords, —spend them, not as a naturalist in close, patient study, because to such a one a square yard of moss is as exhaustless as the forests of Guiana to a Waterton, but as a nemophilist, taking simple delight in mere observation and individual discovery.

"Many haps fall in the field
Seldom seen by watchful eyes."

And so all sorts of curious ways are discoverable by the mere wood-lounger. At one time your way is barred by the great portcullis of the strong threaded web of the field spider, who sits like a porter in king's livery of black and gold at his gate. Then you have a peep into the winding maelström-funnel of another of the spider family. Poe must have suffered metempsychosis into the body of a blue-bottle, when he wrote his "Descent into the Maelström"; for such an insect, hanging midway down that treacherous, sticky descent, and seeing Death creeping up from the bottom to grasp him, might have a clear idea of what was undergone by the fisherman of Lofoden.

Or, if one tire of the open meadows, and the sun be too hot, think of the laurel groves,—not now, as in the Christmas-time, white with snow, but white again with thousands on thousands of argent cups, loaded with blossoms, meeting over your head in arches of flowery tracery, and one solitary tree standing deep in the woods, like a frigate packed with her silver canvas lying out to windward of the fleet of merchantmen she is convoying. The cool laurel groves! Often as one sees that sight, it is always with a fresh shock of pleasure to the frame.

Then, when autumn comes and the leaves change, there is still endless variety for the little basket or botanical-case which swings lightly on your arm or hangs across your shoulder. Owen Jones never devised any ornaments for wall or niche one half so brilliant as the color of those leaves which a dexterous hand will readily group upon a sheet of white paper, where your eye may catch it, as, after achieving a successful sentence, you look up from your study-table. Speaking of leaves, who knows how large an oak-loaf will grow in this New England? I have just sat down after measuring one gathered in a bit of copse hard by the town of M–, a bit of copse which skirts a beautiful wild ravine, with a superb hemlock and pine grove creeping down its steep bank. I have just honestly measured my leaf, and it shows *fourteen* inches in length by a trifle of *nine and a half* in breadth.

In the same ravine I found—and in any patch of woodland you may do the like—a perfect treasury of mosses. A shallow tin box or a wooden bowl filled with these and duly watered will give a winter-garden to the smallest lodging. Sun and light are, as Mr. Toots says, of "no consequence" to the moss family. But if one be above such trifles as mosses, and with Young American loftiness aspire to full-grown trees, there is still plenty to do in the most ordinary woodlands. After a chapter of Mr. Ruskin upon Claude and Poussin and Turner, there is nothing like going to the original documents. In default of the National Gallery from London and the Pitti Palace from the other side of Arno, which cannot be summoned into court at a moment's notice, we can solve at least half the problem. Mr. Ruskin may or may not be right about the Claudes; but it is very easy to see if he be right as to the trees. And if we prove him right with his theory of branches and bark, we have a fair presumption that he has eyes to see the alleged falsehoods in him of Lorraine. Now here is a chance to do a little bit of Art-criticism quite unexpensively. Discontented young gentlemen murmur about the education of this people being too practical, unaesthetic, and all that, and sigh for the culture which a foreign land only can give. But a man who has no eye for Nature will hardly learn to love her at second-hand through the mediation of canvas and colors. I should like very much to be able to walk into a Turner Gallery once a week; but, for all that, I would not give up a Connecticut Valley sunset, such as last summer could be had for the looking at. Not Turner, even, could paint those level shadows, all interfused with trembling light, that filled the hollows of the hills across the river, and brought out their wavy contour, and showed the depth and distance of the valley opening miles away. Could he throw athwart the dark mirror of the sleeping water in the gorge, which led the imprisoned river stealthily to the sea, the gliding snows of the sails rosy-white that stole swan-like from behind the bluffs? Could he bring down the rainbow till its hither abutment rested on the centre of the stream in a transparent mist of driving rain, while its keystone was lost in the stooping cloud above? Art is good, as well as long; but time is also fleeting, and, not being millionnaires, with the luxury of a run across the Atlantic at command, let us make what we can out of what we have. It is very probable that architecture, too, is a sore subject to aspiring Young America, who turns discontentedly from the stucco and pine-plank tracery of the new cathedral of St. Aërian. But let Young America go out to the meadows, and discover for himself a group of young elms. There is one I know of, not unattainable by very moderate pedestrianism from the same seaport before alluded to, where a most exquisite arrangement of arches and tracery can be seen. Six or eight elms, their long bending boughs clothed with thick, clinging leafage, mingle their tops, forming a sort of vaulted roof, such as at the intersection of nave and transepts occurs in every Gothic church which has no central tower. More exquisite curves, better studies for a healthy-minded and original architect, could hardly be found. The interlacing branches are suggestive of tracery-patterns, not to be outdone even in the flamboyant windows of York and Rouen. There is no excuse for the squat, ugly, and stupid arches one sees in almost every attempt at pointed architecture, when the elm-tree springs by every riverside in the land.

But it is time to conclude our desultory rambles. It would be pleasant to me to recall many another of my old haunts, spots which, perhaps, were never called beautiful before now, and may not be again for many a day. For they all lie in a very tame and prosaic country, nearly level, the utmost elevation getting hardly a couple of hundred feet above tidewater mark; a country with less natural

beauty than belongs to most New England towns,—bare, bleak, rocky, with stunted vegetation and ungenial soil. Yet within its limits there are brooks and marshes and copses and woodlands,—rocks over which the wild columbine hangs its fuchsia-like pendants, and dells where nestle the earliest and sweetest of the wood-flowerets.

And now to come back to the miserable sinner. As schoolboy, as bank-clerk, as teacher, as worker in many ways, he has unemployed leisure in the hours of daylight,—not so many as he should have, perhaps, but still many hours in the course of the month. Shall he go to the livery-stable, the bowling-alley, or the billiard-saloon? Not being a saint, of course he can plead no high-toned sense of need of physical culture, to warrant these indulgences. He goes because he likes it, gets enjoyment, exercise, rest for a mind tasked to the full with the day's work. This he ought to have; and if butting little ivory balls about or propelling big wooden ones will give it him, let him have it, if so be that it cannot be got otherwise. There is no contamination in the cue or the ten-pin; but there is in the habits and associations of the places where they are found. Let us not be maw-wormish about it, but tell the truth as it is. The quasi-gambling principle upon which all such places are conducted stimulates the love of hazard and makes way for the betting propensity to become full-blown. Of course, one can bet, if one have money; two lumps of sugar and a few flies will enable a man to lose the fortune of the Rothschilds, if he will. That is not the question. The billiard-saloons do educate men for the gambling-house, simply because they cannot go to them without either losing their money or winning their games. Beside that, the gaseous, dusty, confined, and tobacco-scented air of those places is not to be compared with our free, open, out-doors hills and meadows, for any hygienic purposes.

But, argument apart, there is a sad New England story, so often repeated as to be almost wearisome, were it not so sad. It is of the fresh, frank, honest-hearted boy, who may be seen behind many a bank-counter. At first, so active, trustworthy, and trusted,—yet with the constant temptation of unemployed time and energies demanding supply of action. Little by little these are supplied,—supplied by the billiard-table and its concomitants. It is the same story,—first, rumors, then equivocation, then exposure. Perhaps a petty sum is all; but, to the austere justice of banking, this is as bad, nay, worse than millions. And then a brief paragraph in the newspaper, and one more ruined young man, sulking beside the family-hearthstone, his father's shame, his mother's unextinguishable sorrow,—a candidate for crime, if he have power of mind and spirit to feel, or an imbecile dependant, if he have not.

Now preaching, whether lay or clerical, will not do much to prevent this, especially if it be pitched (as it commonly is) upon too high a key. *Preventing* means, or used to mean, when words had a meaning, *getting beforehand with anything.* And if young Homespun have from the outset something he likes better, he will not take to the ivory balls in pleasant weather, and in rainy weather will be apt to prefer even quite a stupid book to the board of green cloth. Therefore, boys, go,—and girls, too, for that matter,—on flower and moss hunts!—and ye, dear middle-aged people, send them, and go also upon the same! Find something that will tempt you into the woods,—something neither berries nor sassafras,—something which cannot be eaten or sold, but which will simply give you a sense and a love of beauty. These pages have been written to show that it lies at your very doors,—that nothing but stout boots, an old coat or jacket, and an observant eye, is needed. When you come to be saints, or even to be men, there will be plenty of active work to do, if so be that you will only do it. Then, in careful regard to your bodies, you may have hard-trotting (not fast-trotting) horses, pickerel-backed boats, and a billiard-room over the stable,—if your canonization seem to require it. But the saint, if he be true saint, needs no such care. He will get work enough, hard, physical work, if only in trotting up and down the steep stairs of tenant-houses, to keep his digestion in tolerable order. It is only your pseudo-saint, who cuddles himself for the pulpit and the platform, and keeps the safety-valve down with midnight sittings while "rosining up" the furnaces with strong coffee, that will come to grief by collapse of flues. If a man, whether sinner or saint, will run races for the honor of being the fastest boat in the river of popular favor, he must take the consequences.

But for the poor, benighted, heathen sinner, desiring enjoyment that shall be honest, cheap, satisfying, and attainable, I say, in the full faith of the creed of Nemophily,—Get into the woods! No matter what you expect to find there,—go and see what you can find. Don't walk for "constitutionals," without an object at the end or on the way. Keep your feet well shod and your eyes open. Bring home all the flowers and pretty wood-growths you can, and you may find that you have been entertaining angels unawares. Find out about them all you can yourself, and then (in spite of a previous tirade against botany, be it said) go to BIGELOW'S "PLANTS OF BOSTON" and learn more.

SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW

A fatiguing journey up six long, winding flights of smoothly-waxed stairs carried me to the door of the room I occupied in the Place –. But no matter for the name of the Place; no one, I am confident, will visit Paris for the express purpose of satisfying himself that I am to be depended upon, and that there is a house of so many stones in the Place Maubert. Here I lived, *au premier au dessous du soleil*, in the enjoyment of no end of fresh air, especially in winter, and a brilliant prospect up and down the street and over the roofs of the houses across the way, which reached from the Pantheon on the one side, to the peaked roofs and factory-like chimneys of the Tuileries on the other, the dome of the Hôtel des Invalides occupying the centre of the picture. I was studying painting at that time,—learning to paint the much-admired landscapes and figure-pieces which I produce with so much ease now and dispose of with so little,—and, as a general thing, was busy, (though I had my fits of abstraction, like other men of genius, during which I did nothing but lie on my bed and smoke pipes over French novels, or join parties of pleasure into the country or within the barriers,) through the day, and often till late in the evening, in the atelier of one or another of the most renowned artists of the city.

At the head of the last flight of stairs in this house was a narrow passage-way in which I was always obliged to stop and recover my breath, after finishing the one hundred and thirty-nine steps that led to my paradise, before I could get my key into its lock; and into this passage-way opened two doors, one of which, of course, belonged to my room, and the other to some one's else. But who this some one else was I was unable to find out. Was *it*—and how convenient a word is *ça* in such a case!—male or female? I was persuaded it must be a woman, and as a woman I always used to think of her and speak of her, to myself,—and I thought and spoke of her often enough. Of course, I could have settled the question at once by knocking at her door and asking for a match, but I scorned resorting to such weak subterfuges. But how quiet she was! Occasionally, when, contrary to my usual custom, I took another nap after waking in the morning, instead of going out for exercise and a glimpse of early Paris street-life,—occasionally I used to hear her moving about on the other side of the thin partition which separated our rooms, as stealthily as though she feared she might disturb me. She would light her charcoal-stove, and perhaps glide softly by my door and down stairs, to return soon with the paper of coffee, the, bit of bread, and the egg or two which were to serve her for breakfast, and now and then she would sing to herself, but so gently that I never could hear the words of her song, nor scarcely the air. An evil spirit put gimlets into my head, but I shook them out like so much powder, and resolved to be honorable, if I was an artist. I found, however, that my curiosity was an abominable nuisance, that my morning walks were almost entirely neglected, and that I could not bear to leave my room until I had heard her go out and lock her door behind her. Every day, after her departure, I resolved that she should not go out again without being seen by me, and every time I attempted to follow her in such a way as to escape detection I lost sight of her. I nearly fell into the street as I attempted to reach far enough out of my window to see her as she came out at the street-door.

At last, one morning, when it happened, that, just as I had finished dressing myself and was ready to go out, she opened her door and ran down stairs without closing it behind her, carried away by my curiosity, I stepped out into the narrow passage-way and looked into her sanctuary. The room was a smaller one than mine,—but how much neater! The muslin curtains in her window were as white as snow; her wardrobe, which hung against the wall, was protected from the dust by a linen cloth; the floor shone like a mirror. Her canary hung in the window, and greeted me with a perfect whirlwind of *roulades* as I stepped into the room. Her fire was burning briskly under a pot of water, which was just coming to the boiling-point, and singing as gayly and almost as loudly as her bird. Over the back of a chair was thrown the work she had been busied with; and on the bed, almost hid by the curtains, was a pair of the prettiest little blue garters I ever saw, even in Paris,—span-new they

were, and had evidently been bought no longer ago than the evening before,—and some other articles of feminine apparel, which I will not attempt to describe. I looked into her glass, I really believe, with the hope of finding there a faint reflection of her face and figure. She must have looked into it but a minute before going out. A book, like a Testament, lay on the table. I knew I should find her name on the fly-leaf, and was just on the point of satisfying myself with regard to that particular when I heard her feet upon the stairs; and, with a start which nearly carried away the curtains of her bed, I rushed from her room into my own.

How my heart beat, after I had gently closed my door and was sitting on the side of my bed, listening to the movements in the next room! It didn't seem to me as though I had been guilty of a high misdemeanor, and yet, though I had been prepared for her return, I was as much discomposed as though I had been caught peeping.

So far from being satisfied with this resolution of my doubts with regard to the sex of my neighbor, I now found myself more uneasy and curious than before. Was she young and pretty and good? and what did she do? and what was her name? My thoughts were perpetually running up those six flights and stopping baffled at her close-shut door. I drew ideal portraits of her, and introduced them into all my pictures as pertinaciously as Rubens did his wives, and would often finish out an accidental face in a study of rocks, much to my instructor's surprise and my fellow-students' amusement. It was very remarkable, however, that all these fancy sketches bore a striking resemblance to another acquaintance of mine, who will shortly be introduced, and in whom, until I moved into my now room, I had been exclusively interested,—so much so, in fact, that–But I will not anticipate.

Most of my days were spent on the opposite side of the Seine; and, as I crossed that river, by the Pont Royal, at about five o'clock, every evening, on my way to the Laiterie, at which I usually took what I called my dinner, I always stopped to buy a bunch of flowers, of violets in their season, of a charming little flower-girl, who had her stand, on the Quai Voltaire, and who, by the time my turn to be served came, had usually disposed of nearly her whole stock. Every one who looked at her bought of her. She possessed something that was more attractive even than her beauty; though I question, if, without her glossy brown hair, her soft, dark eyes, her glorious complexion, her round, dimpled cheek and chin, her gentle winning smile, and her exquisite taste in dress—I question, if, without all these, her quiet, modest demeanor and unaffected simplicity and propriety would have attracted quite as much attention as they always did.

I had not bought many bouquets of Thérèse before she began to recognize me as I came up, and to greet me with a smile and a *"Bon jour, Monsieur,"* sweeter in tone and accent than any I had ever heard before. What a voice hers was! Its tones were like those of a silver bell; and I found that she always had my bunch of violets or heliotrope ready for me by the time I reached her.

My frugal meal over, I was in the habit of visiting a neighboring *café,* where I read the papers, drank my evening cup of coffee, and, as I smoked my cigar or pipe and twirled my posies in my fingers or held them to my nose, would wonder who she was who sold them to me, if she ever thought of those who bought them of her, and if she distinguished me above her other customers. It seemed to me, that, if she had the same angelic smile and happy greeting for them as she always bestowed upon me, they must one and all be her slaves; and yet I couldn't decide whether I really loved her or was only touched by a passing fancy for her.

I looked forward, however, through the day, to my interview with her with a great deal of impatience, and found myself making short cuts in the long walk which led me to her. I used to arrange, on my way, well-turned sentences with which to please her, and by which I expected to startle her into some intimation of her feelings toward me. I was angry that she was obliged to stand in so public a place, exposed to the gaze and remarks of all who chose to stop and buy of her. In fine, I was jealous, or rather was piqued, that she should receive all others exactly as she received me, and almost flattered myself that necessity forced her to meet them with the same sweet smile inclination led her to bestow on me.

This was the state of affairs at the time I moved into my new lodgings, before referred to, in the Place Maubert, and I was suffering these mental torments for Thérèse's sake, when the appearance, or rather the non-appearance, of my mysterious neighbor aggravated and complicated the symptoms and converted my slow fever into an intermittent. I had called my fair unknown Hermine;—the pronoun *she*, as it applied equally to every individual of the female sex, and in the French language to many things besides, soon became insufficient, and I took the liberty of calling her Hermine. I was so ashamed of my foolish passion, that I could not make up my mind even to question the porter at the door with regard to her, nor to consult any of my better initiated acquaintances as to the proper course to be pursued, but lived out a wretched succession of days and nights of feverish anxiety and expectation,—of what I knew not.

I was on my way over the Pont Royal, one evening, at my usual hour, and was just coming in sight of my bewitching flower-merchant, when a sudden, and, as I believed, a happy thought occurred to me, and I resolved to put it into instant execution. I am sure I blushed and stammered wofully as I asked for *two* bunches of flowers instead of my usual one, and I was confident, that, as she handed them to me without a word, but with such a look, Thérèse's brow was shaded by something more than the dark bands of her brown hair or the edge of her becoming cap, and that her lip quivered rather with a suppressed sigh than with her usual happy smile. I didn't stop to speak with her that night, but hurried away towards my room, conscious—for I did not dare to look behind me, or I am sure I should have relinquished my design—that her large, sorrowful eyes were full of the tears she had kept back while I had stood before her.

I reached my room as soon as possible, and, after assuring myself that my neighbor was still absent, carefully inserted my second nosegay into her keyhole, and rushed from the house as though I had committed burglary.

I was very young then, very romantic, and wholly wanting in assurance. I must have been, or I should never have regarded it as a crime, not against myself, but others, that I was making my days miserable and my nights sleepless on account of two young girls, one of whom I had never seen, and the other of whom was merely a flower-merchant.

When I clambered up to my room late that night, the flowers were no longer where I had put them. I had been torturing myself all the evening with the thought that Hermine might have felt offended, and that I should find them torn in pieces and thrown down at my door, or that she would be waiting for me with a severe reprimand for my boldness and impertinence. But I could find no trace of them, and went to sleep, soothed by the conviction that they had been carefully put by in a glass of water, or were occupying a place on her pillow by the side of her dainty cheek. I feared to meet Thérèse's sorrowful face again the next night, and was troubled so much by the thought of it through the day, that I fairly deserted her that evening and bought my two bouquets elsewhere. With one of these, which I had taken care should be of a finer quality than before, I repeated my experiment of the preceding night and with the same gratifying result. But the day after, forgetting, until it was too late, that I had given Thérèse fair cause to be seriously angry with me, habit carried me to my old resort again, though I had fully determined to reach home by another way, and to patronize, for the future, my new *bouquetière,* who was not only old and ugly, but of the masculine gender. Habit—and perhaps wish had something to do with it—was too strong, however, and I found myself turning down the Quai Voltaire at the customary hour the next evening.

Much to my surprise, and somewhat to my mortification, Thérèse greeted me with her old sunny smile. Her *"Bon jour, Monsieur,"* was as cordial as ever; and it even seemed to me—and that didn't in the least tend to compose me—that her eyes sparkled with an archness which I had never seen in them before, and that her voice had in it a tinge of malice, as she held out to me two of her finest bunches, saying,—

"Est-ce que, Monsieur en desire deux encore ce soir?"

I was very angry with her for being in such good-humor, and believe I was anything but aimable or polite with her. Why did she not look hurt or offended and reproach me for my desertion, instead of almost disarming my senseless anger by her gentleness?

"It seems that Monsieur forgets his old friends, sometimes," she continued, as I took the flowers she had been holding towards me, and was fumbling in my pocket for the change.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.