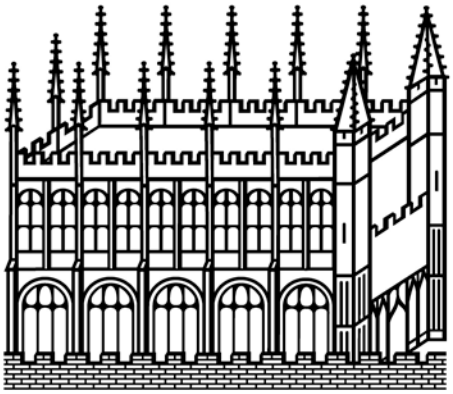
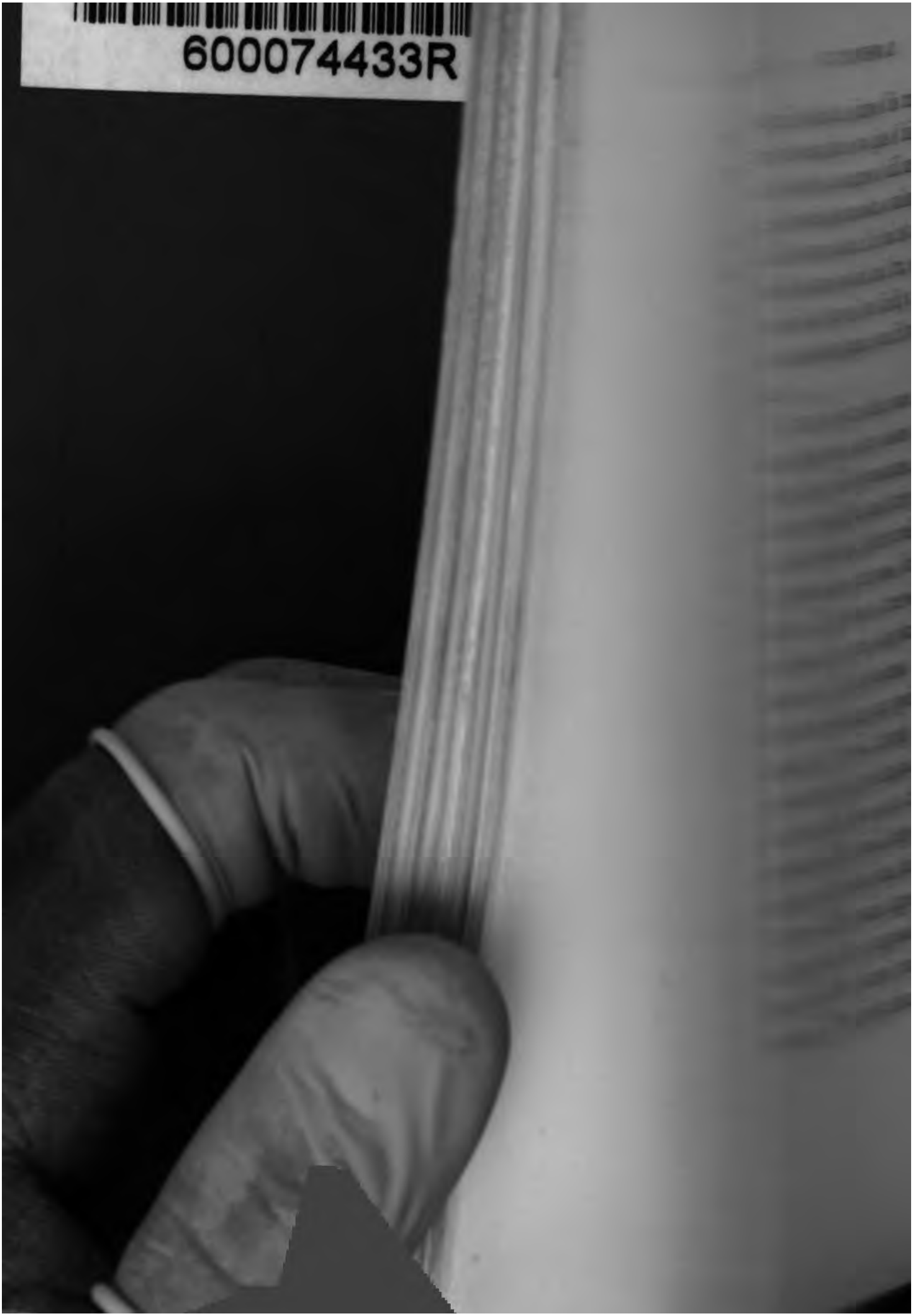


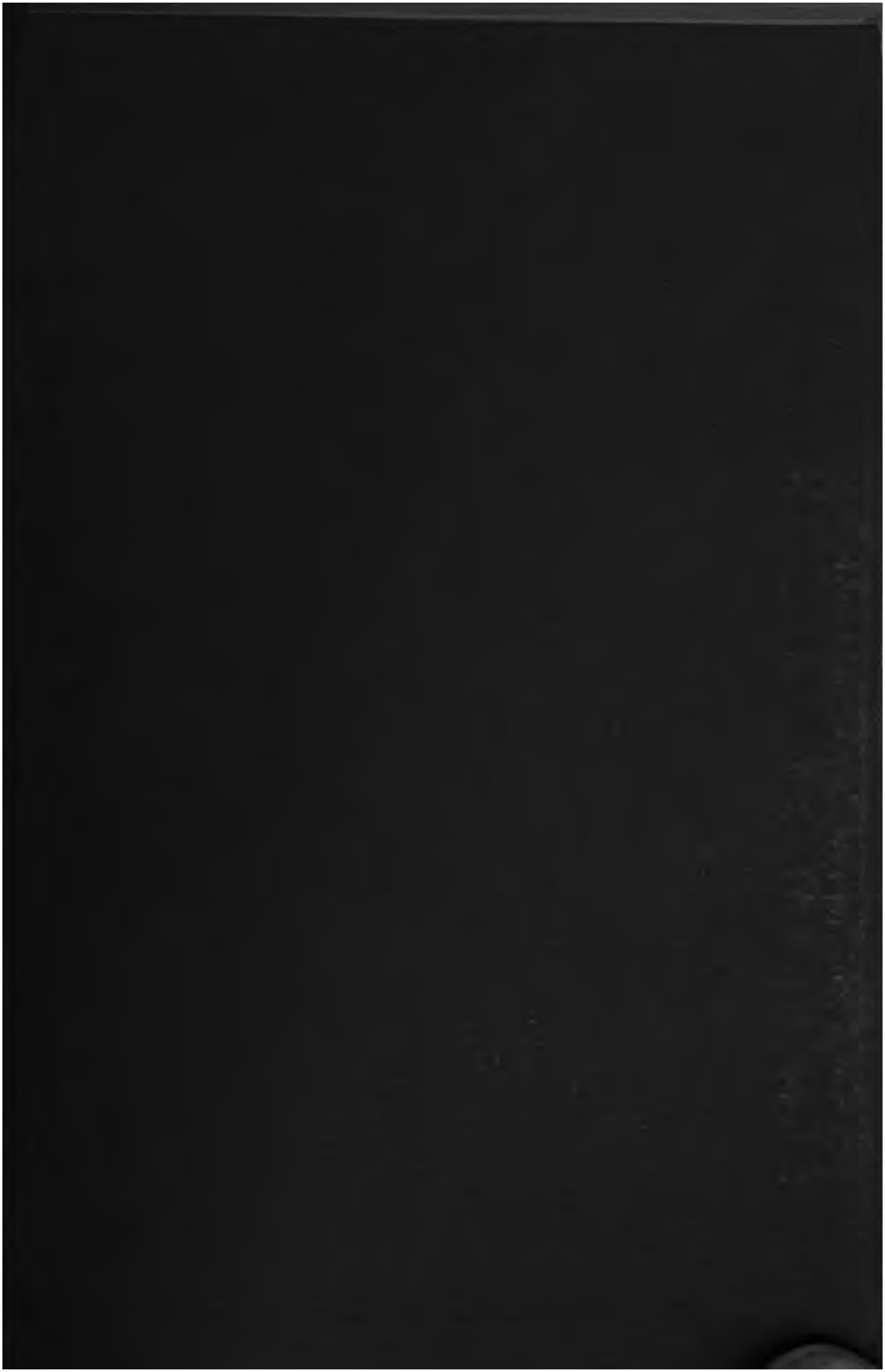
at the Breakfast Table

Oliver Wendell Holmes



nsand years, waiting for his
laid in the dust, touched my
felt bound to speak cheerily.
die yet a while, if we can help
and I trust we can help it.
afraid ; if I live longest, I will
resting-place is kept sacred
ions and buttercups blow over

to have got his wits together
nd to have a vague conscious-
ight have been saying
for anybody's ears.—
little wild, Sir, eh ?—
reat buzzing in my h
yours, and I doub
been a little looser t
Sir. But I don't much w
at 's the truth of the matte
her please me to think that
now nobody will know that
I lie doesn't hold as stout
man as the best of 'em that
if they were proud of the
You may get me well, if
you think it worth while to
you there has been no time
year when the smell of fresh



AUTHOR'S EDITION, WITH LATEST ADDITIONS AND ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.

THE PROFESSOR

AT

THE BREAKFAST TABLE.

WITH THE STORY OF IRIS.

EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS.
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.

THE PROFESSOR

AT THE

BREAKFAST TABLE

BY

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Author's Edition

VOL. II.

EDINBURGH
DAVID DOUGLAS, CASTLE STREET
1883

Edinburgh University Press:
T. AND A. CONSTABLE, PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY.

THE PROFESSOR

AT

THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

VIII.

THERE has been a sort of stillness in the atmosphere of our boarding-house since my last record, as if something or other were going on. There is no particular change that I can think of in the aspect of things; yet I have a feeling as if some game of life were quietly playing and strange forces were at work, underneath this smooth surface of everyday boarding-house life, which would show themselves some fine morning or other in events, if not in catastrophes. I have been watchful, as I said I should be, but have little to tell as yet. You may laugh at me, and very likely think me foolishly fanci-

ful to trouble myself about what is going on in a middling-class household like ours. Do as you like. But here is that terrible fact to begin with,—a beautiful young girl, with the blood and the nerve-fibre that belong to Nature's women, turned loose among live men.

—*Terrible* fact?

Very terrible. Nothing more so. Do you forget the angels who lost heaven for the daughters of men? Do you forget Helen, and the fair women who made mischief and set nations by the ears before Helen was born? If jealousies that gnaw men's hearts out of their bodies,—if pangs that waste men to shadows and drive them into raving madness or moping melancholy,—if assassination and suicide are dreadful possibilities, then there is always something frightful about a lovely young woman.—I love to look at this "Rainbow," as her father used sometimes to call her, of ours. Handsome creature that she is in forms and colours,—the very picture, as it seems to me, of that "golden blonde" my friend whose book you read last year fell in love with when he was a boy (as you remember, no doubt),—handsome as she is, fit for a sea-king's bride,

it is not her beauty alone that holds my eyes upon her. Let me tell you one of my fancies, and then you will understand the strange sort of fascination she has for me.

It is in the hearts of many men and women—let me add children—that there is a *Great Secret* waiting for them,—a secret of which they get hints now and then, perhaps oftener in early than in later years. These hints came sometimes in dreams, sometimes in sudden startling flashes,—second wakings, as it were,—a waking out of the waking state, which last is very apt to be a half-sleep. I have many times stopped short and held my breath, and felt the blood leaving my cheeks, in one of these sudden clairvoyant flashes. Of course I cannot tell what kind of a secret this is; but I think of it as a disclosure of certain relations of our personal being to time and space, to other intelligences, to the procession of events, and to their First Great Cause. This secret seems to be broken up, as it were, into fragments, so that we find here a word and there a syllable, and then again only a letter of it; but it never is written out for most of us as a complete sentence, in this life. I do not think it could be; for I am disposed to con-

sider our beliefs about such a possible disclosure rather as a kind of premonition of an enlargement of our faculties in some future state than as an expectation to be fulfilled for most of us in this life. Persons, however, have fallen into trances,—as did the Reverend William Tennent, among many others,—and learned some things which they could not tell in our human words.

Now among the visible objects which hint to us fragments of this infinite secret for which our souls are waiting, the faces of women are those that carry the most legible hieroglyphics of the great mystery. There are women's faces, some real, some ideal, which contain something in them that becomes a positive element in our creed, so direct and palpable a revelation is it of the infinite purity and love. I remember two faces of women with wings, such as they call angels, of Fra Angelico,—and I just now come across a print of Raphael's Santa Apollina, with something of the same quality,—which I was sure had their prototypes in the world above ours. No wonder the Catholics pay their vows to the Queen of Heaven! The unpoetical side of Protestantism is, that it has no women to be worshipped.

But mind you, it is not every beautiful face that hints the Great Secret to us, nor is it only in beautiful faces that we find traces of it. Sometimes it looks out from a sweet sad eye, the only beauty of a plain countenance; sometimes there is so much meaning in the lips of a woman, not otherwise fascinating, that we know they have a message for us, and wait almost with awe to hear their accents. But this young girl has at once the beauty of feature and the unspoken mystery of expression. Can she tell me anything? Is her life a complement of mine, with the missing element in it which I have been groping after through so many friendships that I have tired of, and through—— Hush! Is the door fast? Talking loud is a bad trick in these curious boarding-houses.

You must have sometimes noted this fact that I am going to remind you of and to use for a special illustration. Riding along over a rocky road, suddenly the slow monotonous grinding of the crushing gravel changes to a deep heavy rumble. There is a great hollow under your feet,—a huge unsunned cavern. Deep, deep beneath you, in the core of the living rock, it arches its awful vault, and

far away it stretches its winding galleries, their roofs dripping into streams where fishes have been swimming and spawning in the dark until their scales are white as milk and their eyes have withered out, obsolete and useless.

So it is in life. We jog quietly along, meeting the same faces, grinding over the same thoughts,—the gravel of the soul's highway,—now and then jarred against an obstacle we cannot crush, but must ride over or round as we best may, sometimes bringing short up against a disappointment, but still working along with the creaking and rattling and grating and jerking that belong to the journey of life, even in the smoothest-rolling vehicle. Suddenly we hear the deep underground reverberation that reveals the unsuspected depth of some abyss of thought or passion beneath us.—

I wish the girl would go. I don't like to look at her so much, and yet I cannot help it. Always that same expression of something that I ought to know,—something that she was made to tell and I to hear,—lying there ready to fall off from her lips, ready to leap out of her eyes and make a saint of me, or a devil or a lunatic, or per-

haps a prophet to tell the truth and be hated of men, or a poet whose words shall flash upon the dry stubble-field of worn-out thoughts and burn over an age of lies in an hour of passion.

It suddenly occurs to me that I may have put you on the wrong track. The Great Secret that I refer to has nothing to do with the Three Words. Set your mind at ease about that,—there are reasons I could give you which settle all that matter. I don't wonder, however, that you confounded the Great Secret with the Three Words.

I LOVE YOU *is* all the secret that many, nay, most women have to tell. When that is said, they are like China-crackers on the morning of the fifth of July. And just as that little patriotic implement is made with a slender train which leads to the magazine in its interior, so a sharp eye can almost always see the train leading from a young girl's eye or lip to the "I love you" in her heart. But the Three Words are not the Great Secret I mean. No, women's faces are only one of the tablets on which that is written in its partial, fragmentary symbols. It lies deeper than Love, though very probably Love is a part of it. Some, I think,

—Wordsworth might be one of them,—spell out a portion of it from certain beautiful natural objects, landscapes, flowers, and others. I can mention several poems of his that have shadowy hints which seem to me to come near the region where I think it lies. I have known two persons who pursued it with the passion of the old alchemists,—all wrong evidently, but infatuated, and never giving up the daily search for it until they got tremulous and feeble, and their dreams changed to visions of things that ran and crawled about their floor and ceilings, and so they died. The vulgar called them drunkards.

I told you that I would let you know the mystery of the effect this young girl's face produces on me. It is akin to those influences a friend of mine has described, you may remember, as coming from certain *voices.* I cannot translate it into words, —only into feelings ; and these I have attempted to shadow by showing that her face hinted that revelation of something we are close to knowing, which all imaginative persons are looking for either in this world or on the very threshold of the next.

You shake your head at the vagueness and

fanciful incomprehensibleness of my description of the expression in a young girl's face. You forget what a miserable surface-matter this language is in which we try to reproduce our interior state of being. Articulation is a shallow trick. From the light Poh! which we toss off from our lips as we fling a nameless scribbler's impertinences into our waste-baskets, to the gravest utterance which comes from our throats in our moments of deepest need, is only a space of some three or four inches. Words, which are a set of clickings, hissings, lispings, and so on, mean very little, compared to tones and expression of the features. I give it up; I thought I could shadow forth in some feeble way, by their aid, the effect this young girl's face produces on my imagination; but it is of no use. No doubt your head aches, trying to make something of my description. If there is here and there one that can make anything intelligible out of my talk about the Great Secret, and who has spelt out a syllable or two of it on some woman's face, dead or living, that is all I can expect. One should see the person with whom he converses about such matters. There are dreamy-eyed people to whom I

should say all these things with a certainty of being understood ;—

> That moment that his face I see,
> I know the man that must hear me :
> To him my tale I teach.

—I am afraid some of them have not got a spare quarter of a dollar for this August number, so that they will never see it.

—Let us start again, just as if we had not made this ambitious attempt, which may go for nothing, and you can have your money refunded, if you will make the change.

This young girl, about whom I have talked so unintelligibly, is the unconscious centre of attraction to the whole solar system of our breakfast-table. The Little Gentleman leans towards her, and she again seems to be swayed as by some invisible gentle force towards him. That slight inclination of two persons with a strong affinity towards each other, throwing them a little out of plumb when they sit side by side, is a physical fact I have often noticed. Then there is a tendency in all the men's eyes to converge on her ; and I do firmly believe, that, if all their chairs were examined, they would be found a little obliquely placed, so as to

favour the direction in which their occupants love to look.

That bland, quiet old gentleman, of whom I have spoken as sitting opposite to me, is no exception to the rule. She brought down some mignonette one morning, which she had grown in her chamber. She gave a sprig to her little neighbour, and one to the landlady, and sent another by the hand of Bridget to this old gentleman.

—Sarvant, Ma'am! Much obleeged,—he said, and put it gallantly in his button-hole. —After breakfast he must see some of her drawings. Very fine performances,—very fine!—truly elegant productions,—truly elegant!—Had seen Miss Linwood's needlework in London, in the year (eighteen hundred and little or nothing, I think he said), —patronised by the nobility and gentry, and Her Majesty,—elegant, truly elegant productions, very fine performances; these drawings reminded him of them;—wonderful resemblance to Nature; an extraordinary art, painting; Mr. Copley made some very fine pictures that he remembered seeing when he was a boy. Used to remember some lines about a portrait written by Mr. Cowper, beginning—

"O that those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last."

And with this the old gentleman fell to thinking about a dead mother of his that he remembered ever so much younger than he now was, and looking, not as his mother, but as his daughter should look. The dead young mother was looking at the old man, her child, as she used to look at him so many, many years ago. He stood still as if in a waking dream, his eyes fixed on the drawings till their outlines grew indistinct and they ran into each other, and a pale, sweet face shaped itself out of the glimmering light through which he saw them.—What is there quite so profoundly human as an old man's memory of a mother who died in his earlier years? Mother she remains till manhood, and by-and-by she grows to be as a sister; and at last, when, wrinkled and bowed and broken, he looks back upon her in her fair youth, he sees in the sweet image he caresses, not his parent, but, as it were, his child.

If I had not seen all this in the old gentleman's face, the words with which he broke

his silence would have betrayed his train of thought.

—If they had only taken pictures then as they do now!—he said.—All gone! all gone! nothing but her face as she leaned on the arms of her great chair; and I would give a hundred pound for the poorest little picture of her, such as you can buy for a shilling of anybody that you don't want to see.—The old gentleman put his hand to his forehead so as to shade his eyes. I saw he was looking at the dim photograph of memory, and turned from him to Iris.

How many drawing-books have you filled, —I said,—since you began to take lessons? ——This was the first,—she answered,—since she was here; and it was not full, but there were many separate sheets of large size she had covered with drawings.

I turned over the leaves of the book before us. Academic studies, principally of the human figure. Heads of sibyls, prophets, and so forth. Limbs from statues. Hands and feet from Nature. What a superb drawing of an arm! I don't remember it among the figures from Michel Angelo, which seem to have been her

patterns mainly. From Nature, I think, or after a cast from Nature.—Oh !——

—Your smaller studies are in this, I suppose,—I said, taking up the drawing-book with a lock on it.——Yes,—she said.——I should like to see her style of working on a small scale.——There was nothing in it worth showing,—she said; and presently I saw her try the lock, which proved to be fast. We are all caricatured in it, I haven't the least doubt. I think, though, I could tell by her way of dealing with us what her fancies were about us boarders. Some of them act as if they were bewitched with her, but she does not seem to notice it much. Her thoughts seem to be on her little neighbour more than on anybody else. The young fellow John appears to stand second in her good graces. I think he has once or twice sent her what the landlady's daughter calls bó-kays of flowers,—somebody has, at any rate.—I saw a book she had, which must have come from the divinity-student. It had a dreary title-page, which she had enlivened with a fancy portrait of the author, —a face from memory, apparently,—one of those faces that small children loathe without knowing why, and which give them that

inward disgust for heaven so many of the little wretches betray, when they hear that these are "good men," and that heaven is full of such. — The gentleman with the *diamond*—the Koh-i-noor, so called by us—was not encouraged, I think, by the reception of his packet of perfumed soap. He pulls his purple moustache and looks appreciatingly at Iris, who never sees him, as it should seem. The young Marylander, who I thought would have been in love with her before this time, sometimes looks from his corner across the long diagonal of the table, as much as to say, I wish you were up here by me, or I were down there by you,—which would, perhaps, be a more natural arrangement than the present one. But nothing comes of all this,—and nothing has come of my sagacious idea of finding out the girl's fancies by looking into her locked drawing-book.

Not to give up all the questions I was determined to solve, I made an attempt also to work into the Little Gentleman's chamber. For this purpose I kept him in conversation, one morning, until he was just ready to go up-stairs, and then, as if to continue the talk, followed him as he toiled back to his

room. He rested on the landing and faced round toward me. There was something in his eye which said, Stop there! So we finished our conversation on the landing. The next day, I mustered assurance enough to knock at his door, having a pretext ready. —No answer.—Knock again. A door, as if of a cabinet, was shut softly and locked, and presently I heard the peculiar dead beat of his thick soled, misshapen boots. The bolts and the lock of the inner door were unfastened,—with unnecessary noise I thought, —and he came into the passage. He pulled the inner door after him and opened the outer one at which I stood. He had on a flowered silk dressing-gown, such as "Mr. Copley" used to paint his old-fashioned merchant-princes in; and a quaint-looking key in his hand. Our conversation was short, but long enough to convince me that the Little Gentleman did not want my company in his chamber, and did not mean to have it.

I have been making a great fuss about what is no mystery at all,—a school-girl's secrets and a whimsical man's habits. I mean to give up such nonsense and mind my own business.—Hark! What the deuce is that odd noise in his chamber?

—I think I am a little superstitious. There were two things, when I was a boy, that diabolised my imagination, — I mean, that gave me a distinct apprehension of a formidable bodily shape which prowled round the neighbourhood where I was born and bred. The first was a series of marks called the "Devil's footsteps." These were patches of sand in the pastures, where no grass grew, where even the low-bush blackberry, the "dewberry," as our Southern neighbours call it, in prettier and more Shakspearian language, did not spread its clinging creepers, — where even the pale, dry, sadly-sweet "everlasting" could not grow, but all was bare and blasted. The second was a mark in one of the public buildings near my home,—the college dormitory named after a Colonial Governor. I do not think many persons are aware of the existence of this mark, — little having been said about the story in print, as it was considered very desirable, for the sake of the Institution, to hush it up. In the north-west corner, and on the level of the third or fourth story, there are signs of a breach in the walls, mended pretty well, but not to be mistaken. A considerable portion

of that corner must have been carried away, from within outward. It was an unpleasant affair; and I do not care to repeat the particulars; but some young men had been using sacred things in a profane and unlawful way, when the occurrence, which was variously explained, took place. The story of the Appearance in the chamber was, I suppose, invented afterwards; but of the injury to the building there could be no question; and the zig-zag line, where the mortar is a little thicker than before, is still distinctly visible. The queer burnt spots, called the "Devil's footsteps," had never attracted attention before this time, though there is no evidence that they had not existed previously, except that of the late Miss M., a "Goody," so called, or sweeper, who was positive on the subject, but had a strange horror of referring to an affair of which she was thought to know something.—I tell you it was not so pleasant for a little boy of impressible nature to go up to bed in an old gambrel-roofed house, with untenanted, locked upper-chambers, and a most ghostly garret,—with the "Devil's footsteps" in the fields behind the house, and in front of it the patched dormitory where the unexplained

occurrence had taken place which startled those godless youths at their mock devotions, so that one of them was epileptic from that day forward, and another, after a dreadful season of mental conflict, took holy orders and became renowned for his ascetic sanctity.

There were other circumstances that kept up the impression produced by these two singular facts I have just mentioned. There was a dark storeroom, on looking through the key-hole of which I could dimly see a heap of chairs and tables, and other four-footed things, which seemed to me to have rushed in there, frightened, and in their fright to have huddled together and climbed up on each other's backs,—as the people did in that awful crush where so many were killed, at the execution of Holloway and Haggerty. Then the Lady's portrait, upstairs, with the sword-thrusts through it,—marks of the British officers' rapiers,—and the tall mirrors in which they used to look at their red coats,—confound them for smashing its mate!—and the deep, cunningly wrought arm-chair in which Lord Percy used to sit while his hair was dressing;—he was a gentleman, and always had it covered with

a large *peignoir*, to save the silk covering my grandmother embroidered. Then the little room down-stairs, from which went the orders to throw up a bank of earth on the hill yonder, where you may now observe a granite obelisk,—"the study," in my father's time, but in those days the council-chamber of armed men,—sometimes filled with soldiers;—come with me, and I will show you the "dents" left by the butts of their muskets all over the floor.—With all these suggestive objects round me, aided by the wild stories those awful country-boys that came to live in our service brought with them,—of contracts written in blood and left out over night, not to be found the next morning (removed by the Evil One, who takes his nightly round among our dwellings, and filed away for future use),—of dreams coming true,—of death-signs,—of apparitions,—no wonder that my imagination got excited, and I was liable to superstitious fancies.

Jeremy Bentham's logic, by which he proved that he couldn't possibly see a ghost, is all very well—in the day-time. All the reason in the world will never get those impressions of childhood, created by just

such circumstance, as I have been telling, out of a man's head. That is the only excuse I have to give for the nervous kind of curiosity with which I watch my little neighbour, and the obstinacy with which I lie awake whenever I hear anything going on in his chamber after midnight.

But whatever further observations I may have made must be deferred for the present. You will see in what way it happened that my thoughts were turned from spiritual matters to bodily ones, and how I got my fancy full of material images,—faces, heads, figures, muscles, and so forth,—in such a way that I should have no chance in this number to gratify any curiosity you may feel, if I had the means of so doing.

Indeed, I have come pretty near omitting my periodical record this time. It was all the work of a friend of mine, who would have it that I should sit to him for my portrait. When a soul draws a body in the great lottery of life, where every one is sure of a prize, such as it is, the said soul inspects the said body with the same curious interest with which one who has ventured into a "gift enterprise" examines the "massive silver pencil-case," with the coppery

smell and impressible tube, or the "splendid gold ring" with the questionable specific gravity, which it has been his fortune to obtain in addition to his purchase.

The soul, having studied the article of which it finds itself proprietor, thinks, after a time, it knows it pretty well. But there is this difference between its view and that of a person looking at us:—we look from within, and see nothing but the mould formed by the elements in which we are encased; other observers look from without, and see us as living statues. To be sure, by the aid of mirrors, we get a few glimpses of our outside aspect; but this occasional impression is always modified by that look of the soul from within outward which none but ourselves can take. A portrait is apt, therefore, to be a surprise to us. The artist looks only from without. He sees us, too, with a hundred aspects we are never likely to see. No genuine expression can be studied by the subject of it in the looking-glass.

More than this; he sees us in a way in which many of our friends or acquaintances never see us. Without wearing any mask we are conscious of, we have a special face for each friend. For, in the first place, each

puts a special reflection of himself upon us, on the principle of assimilation you found referred to in my last record, if you happened to read that document. And secondly, each of our friends is capable of seeing just so far, and no farther, into our face, and each sees in it the particular thing that he looks for. Now the artist, if he is truly an artist, does not take any one of these special views. Suppose he should copy you as you appear to the man who wants your name to a subscription-list, you could hardly expect a friend who entertains you to recognise the likeness to the smiling face which sheds its radiance at his board. Even within your own family, I am afraid there is a face which the rich uncle knows, that is not so familiar to the poor relation. The artist must take one or the other, or something compounded of the two, or something different from either. What the daguerreotype and photograph do is to give the features and one particular look, the very look which kills all expression, that of self-consciousness. The artist throws you off your guard, watches you in movement and in repose, puts your face through its exercises, observes its transitions, and so gets the whole range of its ex-

pression. Out of all this he forms an ideal portrait, which is not a copy of your exact look at any one time or to any particular person. Such a portrait cannot be to everybody what the ungloved call "as nat'ral as life." Every good picture, therefore, must be considered wanting in resemblance by many persons.

There is one strange revelation which comes out, as the artist shapes your features from his outline. It is that you resemble so many relatives to whom you yourself never had noticed any particular likeness in your countenance.

He is at work at me now, when I catch some of these resemblances, thus :—

There ! that is just the look my father used to have sometimes ; I never thought I had a sign of it. The mother's eyebrow and greyish-blue eye, those I knew I had. But there is a something which recalls a smile that faded away from my sister's lips—how many years ago ! I thought it so pleasant in her, that I love myself better for having a trace of it.

Are we not young ? Are we not fresh and blooming ? Wait a bit. The artist takes a mean little brush and draws three

fine lines, diverging outwards from the eye over the temple. Five years.—The artist draws one tolerably distinct and two faint lines, perpendicularly between the eyebrows. Ten years.—The artist breaks up the contours round the mouth, so that they look a little as a hat does that has been sat upon and recovered itself, ready, as one would say, to crumple up again in the same creases, on smiling or other change of feature.—Hold on! Stop that! Give a young fellow a chance! Are we not whole years short of that interesting period of life when Mr. Balzac says that a man, etc., etc., etc.?

There now! That is ourself, as we look after finishing an article, getting a three-mile pull with the ten-foot sculls, redressing the wrongs of the toilet, and standing with the light of hope in our eye and the reflection of a red curtain on our cheek. Is he not a POET that painted us?

"Blest be the art that can immortalise!"

COWPER.

—Young folks look on a face as a unit; children who go to school with any given little John Smith see in his name a distinctive appellation, and in his features as special and definite an expression of his sole indivi-

duality as if he were the first created of his race. As soon as we are old enough to get the range of three or four generations well in hand, and to take in large family histories, we never see an individual in a face of any stock we know, but a mosaic copy of a pattern, with fragmentary tints from this and that ancestor. The analysis of a face into its ancestral elements requires that it should be examined in the very earliest infancy before it has lost that ancient and solemn look it brings with it out of the past eternity; and again in that brief space when Life, the mighty sculptor, has done his work, and Death, his silent servant, lifts the veil and lets us look at the marble lines he has wrought so faithfully; and lastly, while a painter who can seize all the traits of a countenance is building it up, feature after feature, from the slight outline to the finished portrait.

—I am satisfied, that, as we grow older, we learn to look upon our bodies more and more as a temporary possession, and less and less as identified with ourselves. In early years, while the child "feels its life in every limb," it lives in the body and for the body to a very great extent. It ought

to be so. There have been many very interesting children who have shown a wonderful indifference to the things of earth and an extraordinary development of the spiritual nature. There is a perfect literature of their biographies, all alike in their essentials; the same "disinclination to the usual amusements of childhood;" the same remarkable sensibility; the same docility; the same conscientiousness; in short, an almost uniform character, marked by beautiful traits, which we look at with a painful admiration. It will be found that most of these children are the subjects of some constitutional unfitness for living, the most frequent of which I need not mention. They are like the beautiful, blushing, half-grown fruit that falls before its time because its core is gnawed out. They have their meaning,—they do not live in vain,—but they are windfalls. I am convinced that many healthy children are injured morally by being forced to read too much about these little meek sufferers and their spiritual exercises. Here is a boy that loves to run, swim, kick football, turn somersets, make faces, whittle, fish, tear his clothes, coast, skate, fire crackers, blow squash "tooters," cut his name on

fences, read about Robinson Crusoe and Sinbad the Sailor, eat the widest-angled slices of pie and untold cakes and candies, crack nuts with his back teeth and bite out the better part of another boy's apple with his front ones, turn up coppers, "stick" knives, call names, throw stones, knock off hats, set mousetraps, chalk doorsteps, "cut behind" anything on wheels or runners, whistle through his teeth, "hollor" Fire ! on slight evidence, run after soldiers, patronise an engine-company, or, in his own words, "blow for tub No. 11," or whatever it may be; isn't that a pretty nice sort of a boy, though he has not got anything the matter with him that takes the taste of this world out? Now, when you put into such a hot-blooded, hard-fisted, round-cheeked little rogue's hand a sad-looking volume or pamphlet, with the portrait of a thin, white-faced child, whose life is really as much a training for death as the last month of a condemned criminal's existence, what does he find in common between his own overflowing and exulting sense of vitality and the experiences of the doomed offspring of invalid parents? The time comes when we have learned to understand the music of sorrow, the beauty

of resigned suffering, the holy light that plays over the pillow of those who die before their time, in humble hope and trust. But it is not until he has worked his way through the period of honest hearty animal existence, which every robust child should make the most of,—not until he has learned the use of his various faculties, which is his first duty,—that a boy of courage and animal vigour is in a proper state to read these tearful records of premature decay. I have no doubt that disgust is implanted in the minds of many healthy children by early surfeits of pathological piety. I do verily believe that He who took children in His arms and blessed them loved the healthiest and most playful of them just as well as those who were richest in the tuberculous virtues. I know what I am talking about, and there are more parents in this country who will be willing to listen to what I say than there are fools to pick a quarrel with me. In the sensibility and the sanctity which often accompany premature decay I see one of the most beautiful instances of the principle of compensation which marks the Divine benevolence. But to get the spiritual hygiene of robust natures out of the exceptional regi-

men of invalids is just simply what we Professors call "bad practice;" and I know by experience that there are worthy people who not only try it on their own children, but actually force it on those of their neighbours.

—Having been photographed, and stereographed, and chromatographed, or done in colours, it only remained to be phrenologised. A polite note from Messrs. Bumpus and Crane, requesting our attendance at their Physiological Emporium was too tempting to be resisted. We repaired to that scientific Golgotha.

Messrs. Bumpus and Crane are arranged on the plan of the man and the woman in the toy called a "weather-house," both on the same wooden arm suspended on a pivot, —so that when one comes to the door, the other retires backwards, and *vice versâ*. The more particular speciality of one is to lubricate your entrance and exit, — that of the other to polish you off phrenologically in the recesses of the establishment. Suppose yourself in a room full of casts and pictures, before a counterful of books with taking titles. I wonder if the picture of the brain is there, "approved" by a noted Phrenologist,

which was copied from *my*, the Professor's, folio plate in the work of Gall and Spurzheim. An extra convolution, No. 9, *Destructiveness*, according to the list beneath, which was not to be seen in the plate, itself a copy of Nature, was very liberally supplied by the artist, to meet the wants of the catalogue of "organs." Professor Bumpus is seated in front of a row of women,—horn-combers and gold-beaders, or somewhere about that range of life,—looking so credulous, that, if any Second-Advent Miller or Joe Smith should come along, he could string the whole lot of them on his cheapest lie, as a boy strings a dozen "shiners" on a stripped twig of willow.

The Professor (meaning ourselves) is in a hurry, as usual; let the horn-combers wait, —he shall be bumped without inspecting the antechamber.

Tape round the head,—22 inches. (Come on, old 23 inches, if you think you are the better man!)

Feels thorax and arm, and nuzzles round among muscles as those horrid old women poke their fingers into the salt-meat on the provision-stalls at the Quincy Market. Vitality, No. 5 or 6, or something or other.

Victuality (organ at epigastrium), some other number equally significant.

Mild champooing of head now commences. Extraordinary revelations! Cupidiphilous, 6! Hymeniphilous, 6+! Pædiphilous, 5! Deipniphilous, 6! Gelasmiphilous, 6! Musikiphilous, 5! Uraniphilous, 5! Glossiphilous, 8!! and so on. Meant for a linguist. —Invaluable information. Will invest in grammars and dictionaries immediately.—I have nothing against the grand total of my phrenological endowments.

I never set great store by my head, and did not think Messrs. Bumpus and Crane would give me so good a lot of organs as they did, especially considering that I was a *dead*-head on that occasion. Much obliged to them for their politeness. They have been useful in their way by calling attention to important physiological facts. (This concession is due to our immense bump of Candour.)

A Short Lecture on Phrenology, read to the Boarders at our Breakfast-Table.

I shall begin, my friends, with the definition of a *Pseudo-science*. A Pseudo-science

consists of *a nomenclature*, with a self-adjusting arrangement, by which all positive evidence, or such as favours its doctrines, is admitted, and all negative evidence, or such as tells against it, is excluded. It is invariably connected with some lucrative practical application. Its professors and practitioners are usually shrewd people; they are very serious with the public, but wink and laugh a good deal among themselves. The believing multitude consists of women of both sexes, feeble-minded inquirers, poetical optimists, people who always get cheated in buying horses, philanthropists who insist on hurrying up the millennium, and others of this class, with here and there a clergyman, less frequently a lawyer, very rarely a physician, and almost never a horse-jockey or a member of the detective police.—I did not say that Phrenology was one of the Pseudo-sciences.

A Pseudo-science does not necessarily consist wholly of lies. It may contain many truths, and even valuable ones. The rottenest bank starts with a little specie. It puts out a thousand promises to pay on the strength of a single dollar, but the dollar is very commonly a good one. The practi-

tioners of the Pseudo-sciences know that common minds, after they have been baited with a real fact or two, will jump at the merest rag of a lie, or even at the bare hook. When we have one fact found us, we are very apt to supply the next out of our own imagination. (How many persons can read Judges xv. 16 correctly the first time?) The Pseudo-sciences take advantage of this.—I did not say that it was so with Phrenology.

I have rarely met a sensible man who would not allow that there was *something* in Phrenology. A broad, high forehead, it is commonly agreed, promises intellect; one that is "villanous low" and has a huge hind-head back of it, is wont to mark an animal nature. I have as rarely met an unbiassed and sensible man who really believed in the bumps. It is observed, however, that persons with what the Phrenologists call "good heads" are more prone than others toward plenary belief in the doctrine.

It is so hard to prove a negative, that, if a man should assert that the moon was in truth a green cheese, formed by the coagulable substance of the Milky Way, and challenge me to prove the contrary, I might be puzzled. But if he offer to sell me a ton of

this lunar cheese, I call on him to prove the truth of the caseous nature of our satellite, before I purchase.

It is not necessary to prove the falsity of the phrenological statement. It is only necessary to show that its truth is not proved, and cannot be, by the common course of argument. The walls of the head are double, with a great air-chamber between them, over the smallest and most closely crowded "organs." Can you tell how much money there is in a safe, which also has thick double walls, by kneading its knobs with your fingers? So when a man fumbles about my forehead, and talks about the organs of *Individuality*, *Size*, etc., I trust him as much as I should if he felt of the outside of my strong-box and told me that there was a five-dollar or a ten-dollar bill under this or that particular rivet. Perhaps there is; *only he doesn't know anything about it.* But this is a point that I, the Professor, understand, my friends, or ought to, certainly, better than you do. The next argument you will all appreciate.

I proceed, therefore, to explain the self-adjusting mechanism of Phrenology, which is *very similar* to that of the Pseudo-sciences.

An example will show it most conveniently.

A. is a notorious thief. Messrs. Bumpus and Crane examine him and find a good-sized organ of Acquisitiveness. Positive fact for Phrenology. Casts and drawings of A. are multiplied, and the bump *does not lose* in the act of copying.—I did not say it gained.—What do you look so for? (to the boarders.)

Presently B. turns up, a bigger thief than A. But B. has no bump at all over Acquisitiveness. Negative fact; goes against Phrenology.—Not a bit of it. Don't you see how small Conscientiousness is? *That's* the reason B. stole.

And then comes C., ten times as much a thief as either A. or B.,—used to steal before he was weaned, and would pick one of his own pockets and put its contents in another, if he could find no other way of committing petty larceny. Unfortunately, C. has a *hollow*, instead of a bump, over Acquisitiveness. Ah, but just look and see what a bump of Alimentiveness! Did not C. buy nuts and gingerbread, when a boy, with the money he stole? Of course you see why he is a thief, and how his example confirms our noble science.

At last comes along a case which is apparently a *settler*, for there is a little brain with vast and varied powers,—a case like that of Byron, for instance. Then comes out the grand reserve-reason which covers everything, and renders it simply impossible ever to corner a Phrenologist. "It is not the size alone, but the *quality* of an organ, which determines its degree of power."

Oh! oh! I see.—The argument may be briefly stated thus by the Phrenologist: "Heads I win, tails you lose." Well, that's convenient.

It must be confessed that Phrenology has a certain resemblance to the Pseudo-sciences. I did not say it was a Pseudo-science.

I have often met persons who have been altogether struck up and amazed at the accuracy with which some wandering Professor of Phrenology had read their characters written upon their skulls. Of course the Professor acquires his information solely through his cranial inspections and manipulations.—What are you laughing at? (to the boarders).—But let us just *suppose*, for a moment, that a tolerably cunning fellow, who did not know or care anything about Phrenology, should open a shop and un-

dertake to read off people's characters at fifty cents or a dollar apiece. Let us see how well he could get along without the "organs."

I will suppose myself to set up such a shop. I would invest one hundred dollars, more or less, in casts of brains, skulls, charts, and other matters that would make the most show for the money. That would do to begin with. I would then advertise myself as the celebrated Professor Brainey, or whatever name I might choose, and wait for my first customer. My first customer is a middle-aged man. I look at him,—ask him a question or two, so as to hear him talk. When I have got the hang of him, I ask him to sit down, and proceed to fumble his skull, dictating as follows :—

SCALE FROM 1 TO 10.

List of Faculties for Customer.	Private Notes for my Pupil. *Each to be accompanied with a wink.*
Amativeness, 7.	Most men love the conflicting sex, and all men love to be told they do.
Alimentiveness, 8.	Don't you see that he has burst off his lowest waistcoat-button with feeding,—hey ?

Acquisitiveness, 8.	Of course. A middle-aged Yankee.
Approbativeness, 7+.	Hat well brushed. Hair ditto. Mark the effect of that *plus* sign.
Self-esteem, 6.	His face shows that.
Benevolence, 9.	That 'll please him.
Conscientiousness, 8½.	That fraction looks first-rate.
Mirthfulness, 7.	Has laughed twice since he came in.
Ideality, 9.	That sounds well.
Form, Size, Weight, Colour, Locality, Eventuality, etc., etc.,	4 to 6. Average everything that can't be guessed.

And so of the other faculties.

Of course, you know, that isn't the way the Phrenologists do. They go only by the bumps.—What do you keep laughing so for? (to the boarders.) I only said that is the way *I* should practise "Phrenology" for a living.

End of my Lecture.

—The Reformers have good heads, generally. Their faces are commonly serene enough, and they are lambs in private intercourse, even though their voices may be like

The wolf's long howl from Oonalaska's shore,

when heard from the platform. Their greatest spiritual danger is from the perpetual *flattery of abuse* to which they are exposed. These lines are meant to caution them.

SAINT ANTHONY THE REFORMER.

HIS TEMPTATION.

No fear lest praise should make us proud !
  We know how cheaply that is won ;
The idle homage of the crowd
  Is proof of tasks as idly done.

A surface-smile may pay the toil
  That follows still the conquering Right,
With soft, white hands to dress the spoil
  That sunbrowned valour clutched in fight.

Sing the sweet song of other days,
  Serenely placid, safely true,
And o'er the present's parching ways
  Thy verse distils like evening dew.

But speak in words of living power,—
  They fall like drops of scalding rain
That plashed before the burning shower
  Swept o'er the cities of the plain !

Then scowling Hate turns deadly pale,—
  Then Passion's half-coiled adders spring,
And, smitten through their leprous mail,
  Strike right and left in hope to sting.

If thou, unmoved by poisoning wrath,
  Thy feet on earth, thy heart above,
Canst walk in peace thy kingly path,
  Unchanged in trust, unchilled in love,—

Too kind for bitter words to grieve,
  Too firm for clamour to dismay,
When Faith forbids thee to believe,
  And Meekness calls to disobey,—

Ah, then beware of mortal pride!
  The smiling pride that calmly scorns
Those foolish fingers, crimson dyed
  In labouring on thy crown of thorns!

IX.

ONE of our boarders—perhaps more than one was concerned in it—sent in some questions to me the other day, which, trivial as some of them are, I felt bound to answer.

1.—Whether a lady was ever known to write a letter covering only a single page?

To this I answered, that there was a case on record where a lady had but half a sheet of paper and no envelope; and, being obliged to send through the post-office, she *covered* only one side of the paper (crosswise, lengthwise, and diagonally).

2.—What constitutes a man a gentleman?

To this I gave several answers, adapted to particular classes of questioners.

a. Not trying to be a gentleman.

b. Self-respect underlying courtesy.

c. Knowledge and observance of the *fitness of things* in social intercourse.

d. £. S. D. (as many suppose).

3.—Whether face or figure is most attractive in the female sex?

Answered in the following epigram, by a young man about town :—

Quoth Tom, "Though fair her features be,
It is her figure pleases me."
"What may her figure be?" I cried.
"*One hundred thousand!*" he replied.

When this was read to the boarders, the young man John said he should like a chance to "step up" to a figger of that kind, if the girl was one of the right sort.

The landlady said them that merried for money didn't deserve the blessin' of a good wife. Money was a great thing when them that had it made a good use of it. She had seen better days herself, and knew what it was never to want for anything. One of her cousins merried a very rich old gentleman, and she had heerd that he said he lived ten years longer than if he'd stayed by himself without anybody to take care of him. There was nothin' like a wife for nussin' sick folks and them that couldn't take care of themselves.

The young man John got off a little wink, and pointed slyly with his thumb in the direction of our diminutive friend, for whom he seemed to think this speech was intended.

If it was meant for him, he didn't appear to know that it was. Indeed, he seems somewhat listless of late, except when the conversation falls upon one of those larger topics that specially interest him, and then he grows excited, speaks loud and fast, sometimes almost savagely,—and, I have noticed once or twice, presses his left hand to his right side, as if there were something that ached, or weighed, or throbbed in that region.

While he speaks in this way, the general conversation is interrupted, and we all listen to him. Iris looks steadily in his face, and then he will turn as if magnetised and meet the amber eyes with his own melancholy gaze. I do believe that they have some kind of understanding together, that they meet elsewhere than at our table, and that there is a mystery, which is going to break upon us all of a sudden, involving the relations of these two persons. From the very first, they have taken to each other. The one thing they have in common is the heroic will. In him, it shows itself in thinking his way straightforward, in doing battle for "free trade and no right of search" on the high seas of religious controversy, and espe-

cially in fighting the battles of his crooked old city. In her, it is standing up for her little friend with the most queenly disregard of the code of boarding-house etiquette. People may say or look what they like,—she will have her way about this sentiment of hers.

The Poor Relation is in a dreadful fidget whenever the Little Gentleman says anything that interferes with her own infallibility. She seems to think Faith must go with her face tied up, as if she had the toothache,—and that if she opens her mouth to the quarter the wind blows from, she will catch her "death o' cold."

The landlady herself came to him one day, as I have found out, and tried to persuade him to hold his tongue.—The boarders was gettin' uneasy,—she said,—and some of 'em would go, she mistrusted, if he talked any more about things that belonged to the ministers to settle. She was a poor woman, that had known better days, but all her livin' depended on her boarders, and she was sure there wasn't any of 'em she set so much by as she did by him; but there was them that never liked to hear about sech things, except on Sundays.

The Little Gentleman looked very smiling at the landlady, who smiled even more cordially in return, and adjusted her cap-ribbon with an unconscious movement,—a reminiscence of the long-past pairing-time, when she had smoothed her locks and softened her voice, and won her mate by these and other bird-like graces. — My dear Madam, — he said,—I will remember your interests, and speak only of matters to which I am totally indifferent.—I don't doubt he meant this; but a day or two after, something stirred him up, and I heard his voice uttering itself aloud, thus :—

—It must be done, Sir !—he was saying, —it must be done ! Our religion has been Judaised, it has been Romanised, it has been Orientalised, it has been Anglicised, and the time is at hand when it must be AMERICANISED ! Now, Sir, you see what Americanising is in politics ;—it means that a man shall have a vote because he is a man,—and shall vote for whom he pleases, without his neighbour's interference. If he chooses to vote for the Devil, that is his lookout ;—perhaps he thinks the Devil is better than the other candidates ; and I don't doubt he 's often right, Sir ! Just so a man's soul has a vote

in the spiritual community; and it doesn't do, Sir, or it won't do long, to call him "schismatic" and "heretic" and those other wicked names that the old murderous Inquisitors have left us to help along "peace and good-will to men"!

As long as you could catch a man and drop him into an *oubliette*, or pull him out a few inches longer by machinery, or put a hot iron through his tongue, or make him climb up a ladder and sit on a board at the top of a stake so that he should be slowly broiled by the fire kindled round it, there was some sense in these words; they led to something. But since we have done with those tools, we had better give up these words. I should like to see a Yankee advertisement like this!—(the Little Gentleman laughed fiercely as he uttered the words),—

—Patent thumb-screws,—will crush the bone in three turns.

—The cast-iron boot, with wedge and mallet,—only five dollars!

—The celebrated extension-rack, warranted to stretch a man six inches in twenty minutes,—money returned, if it proves unsatisfactory.

I should like to see such an advertisement,

I say, Sir! Now, what's the use of using the words that belonged with the thumb-screws, and the Blessed Virgin with the knives under her petticoats and sleeves and bodice, and the *dry pan and gradual fire*, if we can't have the things themselves, Sir? What's the use of *painting* the fire round a poor fellow, when you think it won't do to kindle one under him,—as they did at Valencia or Valladolid, or wherever it was?

—What story is that?—I said.

Why,—he answered,—at the last *auto-da-fé*, in 1824 or '5, or somewhere there,—it's a traveller's story, but a mighty knowing traveller he is,—they had a "heretic" to use up according to the statutes provided for the crime of private opinion. They couldn't quite make up their minds to burn him, so they only *hung* him in a hogshead painted all over with flames!

No, Sir! when a man calls you names because you go to the ballot-box and vote for your candidate, or because you say this or that is your opinion, he forgets in which half of the world he was born, Sir! It won't be long, Sir, before we have Americanised religion as we have Americanised government; and then, Sir, every soul God

sends into the world will be good in the face of all men for just so much of His "inspiration" as "giveth him understanding"!—None of my words, Sir! none of my words!

—If Iris does not love this Little Gentleman, what does love look like when one sees it? She follows him with her eyes, she leans over toward him when he speaks, her face changes with the changes of his speech, so that one might think it was with her as with Christabel,—

> That all her features were resigned
> To this sole image in her mind.

But she never looks at him with such intensity of devotion as when he says anything about the soul and the soul's atmosphere, religion.

Women are twice as religious as men;—all the world knows that. Whether they are any *better*, in the eyes of Absolute Justice, might be questioned; for the additional religious element supplied by sex hardly seems to be a matter of praise or blame. But in all common aspects they are so much above us that we get most of our religion from them,—from their teachings, from their ex-

ample, — above all, from their pure affections.

Now this poor little Iris had been talked to strangely in her childhood. Especially she had been told that she hated all good things,—which every sensible parent knows well enough is not true of a great many children, to say the least. I have sometimes questioned whether many libels on human nature had not been a natural consequence of the celibacy of the clergy, which was enforced for so long a period.

The child had met this and some other equally encouraging statements as to her spiritual conditions, early in life, and fought the battle of spiritual independence prematurely, as many children do. If all she did was hateful to God, what was the meaning of the approving or else the disapproving conscience, when she had done "right" or "wrong"? No "shoulder-striker" hits out straighter than a child with its logic. Why, I can remember lying in my bed in the nursery and settling questions which all that I have heard since and got out of books has never been able to raise again. If a child does not assert itself in this way in good season, it becomes just what its parents or

teachers were, and is no better than a plaster image.—How old was I at the time?—I suppose about 5823 years old,—that is, counting from Archbishop Usher's date of the Creation, and adding the life of the race, whose accumulated intelligence is a part of my inheritance, to my own. A good deal older than Plato, you see, and much more experienced than my Lord Bacon and most of the world's teachers.—Old books, as you well know, are books of the world's youth, and new books are fruits of its age. How many of all these ancient folios round me are like so many old cupels! The gold has passed out of them long ago, but their pores are full of the dross with which it was mingled.

And so Iris—having thrown off that first lasso, which not only fetters, but *chokes* those whom it can hold, so that they give themselves up trembling and breathless to the great soul-subduer, who has them by the windpipe—had settled a brief creed for herself, in which love of the neighbour, whom we have seen, was the first article, and love of the Creator, whom we have not seen, grew out of this as its natural development, being necessarily second in order of

time to the first unselfish emotions which we feel for the fellow-creatures who surround us in our early years.

The child must have some place of worship. What would a young girl be who never mingled her voice with the songs and prayers that rose all around her with every returning day of rest? And Iris was free to choose. Sometimes one and sometimes another would offer to carry her to this or that place of worship; and when the doors were hospitably opened, she would often go meekly in by herself. It was a curious fact, that two churches as remote from each other in doctrine as could well be divided her affections.

The Church of Saint Polycarp had very much the look of a Roman Catholic Chapel. I do not wish to run the risk of giving names to the ecclesiastical furniture which gave it such a Romish aspect; but there were pictures, and inscriptions in antiquated characters, and there were reading-stands, and flowers on the altar, and other elegant arrangements. Then there were boys to sing alternately in choirs responsive to each other, and there was much bowing, with very loud responding, and a long service and a short sermon, and a bag, such as Judas used to

hold in the old pictures, was carried round to receive contributions. Everything was done not only "decently and in order," but, perhaps one might say, with a certain air of magnifying their office on the part of the dignified clergymen, often two or three in number. The music and the free welcome were grateful to Iris, and she forgot her prejudices at the door of the chapel. For this was a church with open doors, with seats for all classes and all colours alike,—a church of zealous worshippers after their faith, of charitable and serviceable men and women, one that took care of its children and never forgot its poor, and whose people were much more occupied in looking out for their own souls than in attacking the faith of their neighbours. In its mode of worship there was a union of two qualities,—the taste and refinement, which the educated require just as much in their churches as elsewhere, and the air of stateliness, almost of pomp, which impresses the common worshipper, and is often not without its effect upon those who think they hold outward forms as of little value. Under the half-Romish aspect of the Church of Saint Polycarp, the young girl found a devout and loving and

singularly cheerful religious spirit. The artistic sense, which betrayed itself in the dramatic proprieties of its ritual, harmonised with her taste. The mingled murmur of the loud responses, in those rhythmic phrases, so simple, yet so fervent, almost as if every tenth heart-beat, instead of its dull *tic-tac*, articulated itself as "Good Lord, deliver us!"—the sweet alternation of the two choirs, as their holy song floated from side to side,—the keen young voices rising like a flight of singing-birds that passes from one grove to another, carrying its music with it back and forward,—why should she not love these gracious outward signs of those inner harmonies which none could deny made beautiful the lives of many of her fellow-worshippers in the humble, yet not inelegant Chapel of Saint Polycarp?

The young Marylander, who was born and bred to that mode of worship, had introduced her to the chapel, for which he did the honours for such of our boarders as were not otherwise provided for. I saw them looking over the same prayer-book one Sunday, and I could not help thinking that two such young and handsome persons could hardly worship together in safety for a great

while. But they seemed to mind nothing but their prayer-book. By-and-by the silken bag was handed round.—I don't believe she will;—so awkward, you know;—besides, she only came by invitation. There she is, with her hand in her pocket, though,—and sure enough, her little bit of silver tinkled as it struck the coin beneath. God bless her! she hasn't much to give; but her eye glistens when she gives it, and that is all Heaven asks.—That was the first time I noticed these young people together, and I am sure they behaved with the most charming propriety,—in fact, there was one of our silent lady-boarders with them, whose eyes would have kept Cupid and Psyche to their good behaviour. A day or two after this I noticed that the young gentleman had left his seat, which you may remember was at the corner diagonal to that of Iris, so that they have been as far removed from each other as they could be at the table. His new seat is three or four places farther down the table. Of course I made a romance out of this, at once. So stupid not to see it! How could it be otherwise?—Did you speak, Madam? I beg your pardon. (To my lady-reader.)

I never saw anything like the tenderness with which this young girl treats her little deformed neighbour. If he were in the way of going to church, I know she would follow him. But his worship, if any, is not with the throng of men and women and staring children.

I, the Professor, on the other hand, am a regular church-goer. I should go for various reasons, if I did not love it; but I am happy enough to find great pleasure in the midst of devout multitudes, whether I can accept all their creeds or not. One place of worship comes nearer than the rest to my ideal standard, and to this it was that I carried our young girl.

The Church of the Galileans, as it is called, is even humbler in outside pretensions than the Church of Saint Polycarp. Like that, it is open to all comers. The stranger who approaches it looks down a quiet street and sees the plainest of chapels,—a kind of wooden tent, that owes whatever grace it has to its pointed windows and the high, sharp roof,—traces, both, of that upward movement of ecclesiastical architecture which soared aloft in cathedral-spires, shooting into the sky as the spike of a flowering aloe from the cluster

of broad, sharp-wedged leaves below. This suggestion of mediæval symbolism, aided by a minute turret in which a hand-bell might have hung and found just room enough to turn over, was all of outward show the small edifice could boast. Within there was very little that pretended to be attractive. A small organ at one side, and a plain pulpit, showed that the building was a church; but it was a church reduced to its simplest expression.

Yet when the great and wise monarch of the East sat upon his throne, in all the golden blaze of the spoils of Ophir and the freights of the navy of Tarshish, his glory was not like that of this simple chapel in its Sunday garniture. For the lilies of the field, in their season, and the fairest flowers of the year, in due succession, were clustered every Sunday morning over the preacher's desk. Slight, thin-tissued blossoms of pink and blue and virgin white in early spring, then the full-breasted and deep-hearted roses of summer, then the velvet-robed crimson and yellow flowers of autumn, and in the winter delicate exotics that grew under skies of glass in the false summers of our crystal palaces without knowing that it was the

dreadful winter of New England which was rattling the doors and frosting the panes,—in their language the whole year told its history of life and growth and beauty from that simple desk. There was always at least one good sermon,—this floral homily. There was at least one good prayer,—that brief space when all were silent, after the manner of the Friends at their devotions.

Here, too, Iris found an atmosphere of peace and love. The same gentle, thoughtful faces, the same cheerful but reverential spirit, the same quiet, the same life of active benevolence. But in all else how different from the Church of Saint Polycarp! No clerical costume, no ceremonial forms, no carefully trained choirs. A liturgy they have, to be sure, which does not scruple to borrow from the time-honoured manuals of devotion, but also does not hesitate to change its expressions to its own liking.

Perhaps the good people seem a little easy with each other;—they are apt to nod familiarly, and have even been known to whisper before the minister came in. But it is a relief to get rid of that old Sunday—no,—*Sabbath* face, which suggests the idea that the first day of the week is commemorative

of some most mournful event. The truth is, these brethren and sisters meet very much as a family does for its devotions, not putting off their humanity in the least, considering it on the whole quite a delightful matter to come together for prayer and song and good counsel from kind and wise lips. And if they are freer in their demeanour than some very precise congregations, they have not the air of a worldly set of people. Clearly they have *not* come to advertise their tailors and milliners, nor for the sake of exchanging criticisms on the literary character of the sermon they may hear. There is no restlessness and no restraint among these quiet, cheerful worshippers. One thing that keeps them calm and happy during the season so evidently trying to many congregations is, that they join very generally in the singing. In this way they get rid of that accumulated nervous force which escapes in all sorts of fidgety movements, so that a minister trying to keep his congregation still reminds one of a boy with his hand over the nose of a pump which another boy is working,—this spirting impatience of the people is so like the jets that find their way through his fingers, and the grand rush out at the final

Amen ! has such a wonderful likeness to the gush that takes place when the boy pulls his hand away, with immense relief, as it seems, to both the pump and the officiating youngster.

How sweet is this blending of all voices and all hearts in one common song of praise! Some will sing a little loud, perhaps,—and now and then an impatient chorister will get a syllable or two in advance, or an enchanted singer so lose all thought of time and place in the luxury of a closing cadence that he holds on to the last semibreve upon his private responsibility; but how much more of the spirit of the old Psalmist in the music of these imperfectly trained voices than in the academic niceties of the paid performers who take our musical worship out of our hands !

I am of the opinion that the creed of the Church of the Galileans is not laid down in as many details as that of the Church of Saint Polycarp. Yet I suspect, if one of the good people from each of those churches had met over the bed of a suffering fellow-creature, or for the promotion of any charitable object, they would have found they had more in common than all the special beliefs

or want of beliefs that separated them would amount to. There are always many who believe that the fruits of a tree afford a better test of its condition than a statement of the composts with which it is dressed,—though the last has its meaning and importance, no doubt.

Between these two churches, then, our young Iris divides her affections. But I doubt if she listens to the preacher at either with more devotion than she does to her little neighbour when he talks of these matters.

What does he believe? In the first place, there is some deep-rooted disquiet lying at the bottom of his soul, which makes him very bitter against all kinds of usurpation over the right of private judgment. Over this seems to lie a certain tenderness for humanity in general, bred out of lifelong trial, I should say, but sharply streaked with fiery lines of wrath at various individual acts of wrong, especially if they come in an ecclesiastical shape, and recall to him the days when his mother's great-grandmother was strangled on Witch Hill, with a text from the Old Testament for her halter. With all this, he has a boundless belief in the future of this

experimental hemisphere, and especially in the destiny of the free thought of its north-eastern metropolis.

—A man can see further, Sir,—he said one day,—from the top of Boston State-House, and see more that is worth seeing, than from all the pyramids and turrets and steeples in all the places in the world. No smoke, Sir; no fog, Sir; and a clean sweep from the Outer Light and the sea beyond it to the New Hampshire mountains! Yes, Sir,—and there are great truths that are higher than mountains and broader than seas, that people are looking for from the tops of these hills of ours,—such as the world never saw, though it might have seen them at Jerusalem, if its eyes had been open!—Where do they have most crazy people? Tell me that, Sir!

I answered that I had heard it said there were more in New England than in most countries, perhaps more than in any part of the world.

Very good, Sir,—he answered.—When have there been most people killed and wounded in the course of this century?

During the wars of the French Empire, no doubt,—I said.

That 's it ! that 's it !—said the Little Gentleman ;—where the battle of intelligence is fought, there are most minds bruised and broken ! We 're battling for a faith here, Sir.

The divinity-student remarked, that it was rather late in the world's history for men to be looking out for a new faith.

I didn't say a new faith,—said the Little Gentleman ;—old or new, it can't help being different here in this American mind of ours from anything that ever was before ; the *people* are new, Sir, and that makes the difference. One load of corn goes to the sty, and makes the fat of swine,—another goes to the farm-house, and becomes the muscle that clothes the right arms of heroes. It isn't where a pawn stands on the board that makes the difference, but what the game round it is when it is on this or that square.

Can any man look round and see what Christian countries are now doing, and how they are governed, and what is the general condition of society, without seeing that Christianity is the flag under which the world sails, and not the rudder that steers its course? No, Sir ! There was a great raft built about two thousand years ago,—

call it an ark, rather,—the world's great ark ! big enough to hold all mankind, and made to be launched right out into the open waves of life,—and here it has been lying, one end on the shore and one end bobbing up and down in the water, men fighting all the time as to who should be captain and who should have the state-rooms, and throwing each other over the side because they could not agree about the points of compass, but the great vessel never getting afloat with its freight of nations and their rulers ;—and now, Sir, there is and has been for this long time a fleet of "heretic" lighters sailing out of Boston Bay and they have been saying, and they say now, and they mean to keep saying, "Pump out your bilge-water, shovel over your loads of idle ballast, get out your old rotten cargo, and we will carry it out into deep waters and sink it where it will never be seen again ; so shall the ark of the world's hope float on the ocean, instead of sticking in the dock-mud where it is lying !"

It 's a slow business, this of getting the ark launched. The Jordan wasn't deep enough, and the Tiber wasn't deep enough, and the Rhone wasn't deep enough, and the

Thames wasn't deep enough,—and perhaps the Charles isn't deep enough ; but I don't feel sure of that, Sir, and I love to hear the workmen knocking at the old blocks of tradition and making the ways smooth with the oil of the Good Samaritan. I don't know, Sir,—but I do think she stirs a little,—I do believe she slides ;—and when I think of what a work that is for the dear old three-breasted mother of American liberty, I would not take all the glory of all the greatest cities in the world for my birthright in the soil of little Boston !

—Some of us could not help smiling at this burst of local patriotism, especially when it finished with the last two words.

And Iris smiled too. But it was the radiant smile of pleasure which always lights up her face when her little neighbour gets excited on the great topics of progress in freedom and religion, and especially on the part which, as he pleases himself with believing, his own city is to take in that consummation of human development to which he looks forward.

Presently she looked into his face with a changed expression,—the anxiety of a mother that sees her child suffering.

You are not well,—she said.

I am never well,—he answered.—His eyes fell mechanically on the death's-head ring he wore on his right hand. She took his hand as if it had been a baby's, and turned the grim device so that it should be out of sight. One slight, sad, slow movement of the head seemed to say, "The death-symbol is still there!"

A very odd personage, to be sure! Seems to know what is going on,—reads books, old and new,—has many recent publications sent him, they tell me,—but, what is more curious, keeps up with the everyday affairs of the world too. Whether he hears everything that is said with preternatural acuteness, or whether some confidential friend visits him in a quiet way, is more than I can tell. I can make nothing more of the noises I hear in his room than my old conjectures. The movements I mention are less frequent, but I often hear the plaintive cry,—I observe that it is rarely laughing of late;—I never have detected one articulate word, but I never heard such tones from anything but a human voice.

There has been, of late, a deference ap-

proaching to tenderness, on the part of the boarders generally, so far as he is concerned. This is doubtless owing to the air of suffering which seems to have saddened his look of late. Either some passion is gnawing at him inwardly, or some hidden disease is at work upon him.

—What 's the matter with Little Boston ? —said the young man John to me one day. —There a'n't much of him, anyhow ; but 't seems to me he looks peakeder than ever. The old woman says he 's in a bad way, 'n' wants a nuss to take care of him. Them nusses that take care of old rich folks marry 'em sometimes,—'n' they don't commonly live a great while after that. *No, Sir !* I don't see what he wants to die for, after he 's taken so much trouble to live in such poor accommodations as that crooked body of his. I should like to know how his soul crawled into it, 'n how it 's goin' to get out. What business has he to die, I should like to know ? Let Ma'am Allen (the gentleman with the *diamond*) die, if he likes, and be (this is a family magazine) ; but we a'n't goin' to have *him* dyin'. Not by a great sight. Can't do without him anyhow. A'n't it fun to hear him blow off his steam ?

I believe the young fellow would take it as a personal insult if the Little Gentleman should show any symptoms of quitting our table for a better world.

—In the meantime, what with going to church in company with our young lady, and taking every chance I could get to talk with her, I have found myself becoming, I will not say intimate, but well acquainted with Miss Iris. There is a certain frankness and directness about her that perhaps belong to her artist nature. For, you see, the one thing that marks the true artist is a clear perception and a firm, bold hand, in distinction from that imperfect mental vision and uncertain touch which give us the feeble pictures and the lumpy statues of the mere artisans on canvas or in stone. A true artist, therefore, can hardly fail to have a sharp, well-defined mental physiognomy. Besides this, many young girls have a strange audacity blended with their instinctive delicacy. Even in physical daring many of them are a match for boys: whereas you will find few among mature women, and especially if they are mothers, who do not confess, and not unfrequently proclaim, their timidity. One of these young girls, as many

of us hereabouts remember, climbed to the top of a jagged, slippery rock lying out in the waves,—an ugly height to get up, and a worse one to get down, even for a bold young fellow of sixteen. Another was in the way of climbing tall trees for crows' nests,—and crows generally know about how far boys can "shin up," and set their household establishments above that high-water-mark. Still another of these young ladies I saw for the first time in an open boat, tossing on the ocean ground-swell, a mile or two from shore, off a lonely island. She lost all her daring, after she had some girls of her own to look out for.

Many blondes are very gentle, yielding in character, impressible, unelastic. But the *positive* blondes, with the golden tint running through them, are often full of character. They come, probably enough, from those deep-bosomed German women that Tacitus portrayed in such strong colours. The *negative* blondes, or those women whose tints have faded out as their line of descent has become impoverished, are of various blood, and in them the soul has often become pale with that blanching of the hair and loss of colour in the eyes which

makes them approach the character of Albinesses.

I see in this young girl that union of strength and sensibility which, when directed and impelled by the strong instinct so apt to accompany this combination of active and passive capacity, we call *genius*. She is not an accomplished artist certainly, as yet; but there is always an air in every careless figure she draws, as it were of upward aspiration,—the *élan* of John of Bologna's Mercury,—a lift to them, as if they had on winged sandals, like the herald of the Gods. I hear her singing sometimes; and though she evidently is not trained, yet is there a wild sweetness in her fitful and sometimes fantastic melodies,—such as can come only from the inspiration of the moment,—strangely enough, reminding me of those long passages I have heard from my little neighbour's room, yet of different tone, and by no means to be mistaken for those weird harmonies.

I cannot pretend to deny that I am interested in the girl. Alone, unprotected, as I have seen so many young girls left in boarding-houses, the centre of all the men's eyes that surround the table, watched with

jealous sharpness by every woman, most of all by that poor relation of our landlady, who belongs to the class of women that like to catch others in mischief when they themselves are too mature for indiscretions (as one sees old rogues turn to thief-catchers), one of Nature's *gendarmerie*, clad in a complete suit of wrinkles, the cheapest coat-of-mail against the shafts of the great little enemy,—so surrounded, Iris spans this commonplace household-life of ours with her arch of beauty, as the rainbow, whose name she borrows, looks down on a dreary pasture with its feeding flocks and herds of indifferent animals.

These young girls that live in boarding-houses can do pretty much as they will. The female *gendarmes* are off guard occasionally. The sitting-room has its solitary moments, when any two boarders who wish to meet may come together accidentally (*accidentally*, I said, Madam, and I had not the slightest intention of Italicising the word), and discuss the social or political questions of the day, or any other subject that may prove interesting. Many charming conversations take place at the foot of the stairs, or while one of the parties is

holding the latch of a door,—in the shadow of porticoes, and especially on those outside balconies which some of our Southern neighbours call "stoops," the most charming places in the world when the moon is just right and the roses and honeysuckles are in full blow,—as we used to think in eighteen hundred and never mention it.

On such a balcony or "stoop," one evening, I walked with Iris. We were on pretty good terms now, and I had coaxed her arm under mine,—my left arm, of course. That leaves one's right arm free to defend the lovely creature, if the rival—odious wretch! —attempt to ravish her from your side. Likewise if one's heart should happen to beat a little, its mute language will not be without its meaning, as you will perceive when the arm you hold begins to tremble,—a circumstance like to occur, if you happen to be a good-looking young fellow, and you two have the "stoop" to yourselves.

We had it to ourselves that evening. The Koh-i-noor, as we called him, was in a corner with our landlady's daughter. The young fellow John was smoking out in the yard. The *gendarme* was afraid of the evening air, and kept inside. The young Marylander

came to the door, looked out and saw us walking together, gave his hat a pull over his forehead and stalked off. I felt a slight spasm, as it were, in the arm I held, and saw the girl's head turn over her shoulder for a second. What a kind creature this is! She has no special interest in this youth, but she does not like to see a young fellow going off because he feels as if he were not wanted.

She had her locked drawing-book under her arm.—Let me take it,—I said.

She gave it to me to carry.

This is full of caricatures of all of us, I am sure,—said I.

She laughed, and said,—No,—not all of you.

I was there, of course?

Why, no,—she had never taken so much pains with me.

Then she would let me see the inside of it?

She would think of it.

Just as we parted, she took a little key from her pocket and handed it to me. This unlocks my naughty book,—she said,—you shall see it. I am not afraid of you.

I don't know whether the last words

exactly pleased me. At any rate, I took the book and hurried with it to my room. I opened it, and saw, in a few glances, that I held the heart of Iris in my hand.

—I have no verses for you this month, except these few lines suggested by the season.

MIDSUMMER.

Here ! sweep these foolish leaves away,—
I will not crush my brains to-day !—
Look ! are the southern curtains drawn ?
Fetch me a fan, and so begone !

Not that,—the palm-tree's rustling leaf
Brought from a parching coral-reef !
Its breath is heated ;—I would swing
The broad grey plumes,—the eagle's wing.

I hate these roses' feverish blood !—
Pluck me a half-blown lily-bud,
A long-stemmed lily from the lake,
Cold as a coiling water-snake.

Rain me sweet odours on the air,
And wheel me up my Indian chair,
And spread some book not overwise
Flat out before my sleepy eyes.

—Who knows it not, —this dead recoil
Of weary fibres stretched with toil,—
The pulse that flutters faint and low
When Summer's seething breezes blow ?

O Nature ! bare thy loving breast
And give thy child one hour of rest,—
One little hour to lie unseen
Beneath thy scarf of leafy green !

So, curtained by a singing pine,
Its murmuring voice shall blend with mine,
Till, lost in dreams, my faltering lay
In sweeter music dies away.

X.

Iris, her Book.

I PRAY thee by the soul of her that bore thee,
By thine own sister's spirit I implore thee,
Deal gently with the leaves that lie before thee!

For Iris had no mother to enfold her,
Nor ever leaned upon a sister's shoulder,
Telling the twilight thoughts that Nature told her.

She had not learned the mystery of awaking
Those chorded keys that soothe a sorrow's aching,
Giving the dumb heart voice, that else were breaking.

Yet lived, wrought, suffered. Lo, the pictured token!
Why should her fleeting day-dreams fade unspoken,
Like daffodils that die with sheaths unbroken?

She knew not love, yet lived in maiden fancies,—
Walked simply clad, a queen of high romances,
And talked strange tongues with angels in her trances.

Twin-souled she seemed, a twofold nature wearing,—
Sometimes a flashing falcon in her daring,
Then a poor mateless dove that droops despairing.

Questioning all things: Why her Lord had sent her?
What were these torturing gifts, and wherefore lent her?
Scornful as spirit fallen, its own tormentor.

And then all tears and anguish: Queen of Heaven,
Sweet Saints, and Thou by mortal sorrows riven,
Save me! oh, save me! Shall I die forgiven?

And then——Ah, God! But nay, it little matters:
Look at the wasted seeds that autumn scatters,
The myriad germs that Nature shapes and shatters!

If she had——Well! She longed, and knew not wherefore,
Had the world nothing she might live to care for?
No second self to say her evening prayer for?

She knew the marble shapes that set men dreaming,
Yet with her shoulders bare and tresses streaming
Showed not unlovely to her simple seeming.

Vain? Let it be so! Nature was her teacher.
What if a lonely and unsistered creature
Loved her own harmless gift of pleasing feature,

Saying, unsaddened,—This shall soon be faded,
And double-hued the shining tresses braided,
And all the sunlight of the morning shaded?

——This her poor book is full of saddest follies,
Of tearful smiles and laughing melancholies,
With summer roses twined and wintry hollies.

In the strange crossing of uncertain chances,
Somewhere, beneath some maiden's tear-dimmed glances
May fall her little book of dreams and fancies.

Sweet sister! Iris, who shall never name thee,
Trembling for fear her open heart may shame thee,
Speaks from this vision-haunted page to claim thee.

Spare her, I pray thee! If the maid is sleeping,
Peace with her! she has had her hour of weeping.
No more! She leaves her memory in thy keeping.

These verses were written in the first leaves of the locked volume. As I turned the pages, I hesitated for a moment. Is it quite fair to take advantage of a generous, trusting impulse to read the unsunned depths of a young girl's nature, which I can look through, as the balloon-voyagers tell us they see from their hanging-baskets through the translucent waters which the keenest eye of such as sail over them in ships might strive to pierce in vain? Why has the child trusted *me* with such artless confessions,—self-revelations, which might be whispered by trembling lips, under the veil of twilight, in sacred confessionals, but which I cannot look at in the light of day without a feeling of wronging a sacred confidence?

To all this the answer seemed plain enough after a little thought. She did not know how fearfully she had disclosed herself; she was too profoundly innocent. Her soul was no more ashamed than the fair shapes that

walked in Eden without a thought of over-liberal loveliness. Having nobody to tell her story to,—having, as she said in her verses, no musical instrument to laugh and cry with her,—nothing, in short, but the language of pen and pencil,—all the veinings of her nature were impressed on these pages, as those of a fresh leaf are transferred to the blank sheets which enclose it. It was the same thing which I remember seeing beautifully shown in a child of some four or five years we had one day at our boarding-house. This child was a deaf mute. But its soul had the inner sense that answers to hearing, and the shaping capacity which through natural organs realises itself in words. Only it had to talk with its face alone; and such speaking eyes, such rapid alternations of feeling and shifting expressions of thought as flitted over its face, I have never seen in any other human countenance.

I wonder if something of spiritual *transparency* is not typified in the golden-*blonde* organisation. There are a great many little creatures,—many small fishes, for instance,—which are literally transparent, with the exception of some of the internal organs. The heart can be seen beating as if in a case

of clouded crystal. The central nervous column with its sheath runs as a dark stripe through the whole length of the diaphanous muscles of the body. Other little creatures are so darkened with pigment that we can see only their surface. Conspirators and poisoners are painted with black, beady eyes and swarthy hue ; Judas, in Leonardo's picture, is the model of them all.

However this may be, I should say there never had been a book like this of Iris,—so full of the heart's silent language, so transparent that the heart itself could be seen beating through it. I should say there never could have been such a book, but for one recollection, which is not peculiar to myself, but is shared by a certain number of my former townsmen. If you think I overcolour this matter of the young girl's book, hear this, which there are others, as I just said, besides myself, will tell vou is strictly true.

The Book of the Three Maiden Sisters.

In the town called Cantabridge, now a city, water-veined and gas windpiped, in the street running down to the Bridge, beyond

which dwelt Sally, told of in a book of a friend of mine, was of old a house inhabited by three maidens. They left no near kinsfolk, I believe; whether they did or not, I have no ill to speak of them; for they lived and died in all good report and maidenly credit. The house they lived in was of the small, gambrel-roofed cottage pattern, after the shape of Esquires' houses, but after the size of the dwellings of handicraftsmen. The lower story was fitted up as a shop. Specially was it provided with one of those half-doors now so rarely met with, which are to whole doors as spencers worn by old folk are to coats. They speak of limited commerce united with a social or observing disposition on the part of the shopkeeper,—allowing, as they do, talk with passers-by, yet keeping off such as have not the excuse of business to cross the threshold. On the door-posts, at either side, above the half-door, hung certain perennial articles of merchandise, of which my memory still has hanging among its faded photographs a kind of netted scarf and some pairs of thick woollen stockings. More articles, but not very many, were stored inside; and there was one drawer, containing children's books,

out of which I once was treated to a minute quarto ornamented with handsome cuts. This was the only purchase I ever *knew* to be made at the shop kept by the three maiden ladies, though it is probable there were others. So long as I remember the shop, the same scarf and, I should say, the same stockings hung on the door-posts.—[You think I am exaggerating again, and that shopkeepers would not keep the same article exposed for years. Come to me, the Professor, and I will take you in five minutes to a shop in this city where I will show you an article hanging now in the very place where more than *thirty years ago* I myself inquired the price of it of the present head of the establishment.]

The three maidens were of comely presence, and one of them had had claims to be considered a Beauty. When I saw them in the old meeting-house on Sundays, as they rustled in through the aisles in silks and satins, not gay, but more than decent, as I remember them, I thought of My Lady Bountiful in the history of *Little King Pippin*, and of the Madam Blaize of Goldsmith (who, by the way, must have taken the hint of it from a pleasant poem, "Monsieur de la

Palisse," attributed to De la Monnoye, in the collection of French songs before me).[1] There was some story of an old romance in which the Beauty had played her part. Perhaps they all had had lovers; for, as I said, they were shapely and seemly personages, as I remember them; but their lives were out of the flower and in the berry at the time of my first recollections.

One after another they all three dropped away, objects of kindly attention to the good people round, leaving little or almost nothing, and nobody to inherit it. Not absolutely nothing, of course. There must have been a few old dresses, perhaps some bits of furniture, a Bible, and the spectacles the good old souls read it through, and little keepsakes, such as make us cry to look at, when we find them in old drawers;—such relics there must have been. But there was more. There was a manuscript of some hundred pages, closely written, in which the poor things had chronicled for many years the incidents of their daily life. After their death it was passed round somewhat freely, and fell into my hands. How I have cried and laughed and coloured over it! There

[1] *Vide* Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations.*

was nothing in it to be ashamed of, perhaps there was nothing in it to laugh at, but such a picture of the mode of being of poor simple good old women I do believe was never drawn before. And there were all the smallest incidents recorded, such as do really make up humble life, but which die out of all mere literary memoirs, as the houses where the Egyptians or the Athenians lived crumble and leave only their temples standing. I know, for instance, that on a given day of a certain year, a kindly woman, herself a poor widow now, I trust, not without special mercies in heaven for her good deeds,—for I read her name on a proper tablet in the churchyard a week ago,—sent a fractional pudding from her own table to the Maiden Sisters, who, I fear, from the warmth and detail of their description, were fasting, or at least on short allowance, about that time. I know who sent them the segment of melon, which in her riotous fancy one of them compared to those huge barges to which we give the ungracious name of mudscows. But why should I illustrate further what it seems almost a breach of confidence to speak of? Some kind friend who could challenge a nearer interest than the curious strangers

into whose hands the book might fall, at last claimed it, and I was glad that it should be henceforth sealed to common eyes. I learned from it that every good and, alas! every evil act we do may slumber unforgotten even in some earthly record. I got a new lesson in that humanity which our sharp race finds it so hard to learn. The poor widow fighting hard to feed and clothe and educate her children, had not forgotten the poorer ancient maidens. I remembered it the other day, as I stood by her place of rest, and I felt sure that it was remembered elsewhere. I know there are prettier words than *pudding*, but I can't help it,—the pudding went upon the record, I feel sure, with the mite which was cast into the treasury by that other poor widow whose deed the world shall remember for ever, and with the coats and garments which the good women cried over, when Tabitha, called by interpretation Dorcas, lay dead in the upper chamber, with her needlework strewed around her.

—Such was the Book of the Maiden Sisters. You will believe me more readily

now when I tell you that I found the soul of Iris in the one that lay open before me. Sometimes it was a poem that held it, sometimes a drawing,—angel, arabesque, caricature, or a mere hieroglyphic symbol of which I could make nothing. A rag of cloud on one page, as I remember, with a streak of red zigzagging out of it across the paper as naturally as a crack runs through a China bowl. On the next page a dead bird,—some little favourite, I suppose; for it was worked out with a special love, and I saw on the leaf that sign with which once or twice in my life I have had a letter sealed,—a round spot where the paper is slightly corrugated, and, if there is writing there, the letters are somewhat faint and blurred. Most of the pages were surrounded with emblematic traceries. It was strange to me at first to see how often she introduced those homelier wild-flowers which we call *weeds*,—for it seemed there was none of them too humble for her to love, and none too little cared for by Nature to be without its beauty for her artist eye and pencil. By the side of the garden flowers, —of Spring's curled darlings, the hyacinths, of rosebuds, dear to sketching maidens, of flower-de-luces and morning-glories, — nay,

oftener than these, and more tenderly caressed by the coloured brush that rendered them,—were those common growths which fling themselves to be crushed under our feet and our wheels, making themselves so cheap in this perpetual martyrdom that we forget each of them is a ray of the Divine beauty.

Yellow japanned buttercups and star-disked dandelions,—just as we see them lying in the grass, like sparks that have leaped from the kindling sun of summer; the profuse daisy-like flower which whitens the fields, to the great disgust of liberal shepherds, yet seems fair to loving eyes, with its button-like mound of gold set round with milk-white rays; the tall-stemmed succory, setting its pale blue flowers aflame, one after another, sparingly, as the lights are kindled in the candelabra of decaying palaces where the heirs of dethroned monarchs are dying out; the red and white clovers; the broad, flat leaves of the plantain,—"the white man's foot," as the Indians called it,—the wiry, jointed stems of that iron creeping plant which we call "knot-*grass*," and which loves its life so dearly that it is next to impossible to mur-

der it with a hoe, as it clings to the cracks of the pavement;—all these plants, and many more, she wove into her fanciful garlands and borders.—On one of the pages were some musical notes. I touched them from curiosity on a piano belonging to one of our boarders. Strange! There are passages that I have heard before, plaintive, full of some hidden meaning, as if they were gasping for words to interpret them. She must have heard the strains that have so excited my curiosity, coming from my neighbour's chamber. The illuminated border she had traced round the page that held these notes took the place of the words they seemed to be aching for. Above, a long monotonous sweep of waves, leaden-hued, anxious and jaded and sullen, if you can imagine such an expression in water. On one side an Alpine *needle*, as it were, of black basalt, girdled with snow. On the other a threaded waterfall. The red morning-tint that shone in the drops had a strange look,—one would say the cliff was bleeding;—perhaps she did not mean it. Below, a stretch of sand, and a solitary bird of prey, with his wings spread over some unseen object. And on the very next page

a procession wound along, after the fashion of that on the title-page of Fuller's *Holy War*, in which I recognised without difficulty every boarder at our table in all the glory of the most resplendent caricature—three only excepted,—the Little Gentleman, myself, and one other.

I confess I did expect to see something that would remind me of the girl's little deformed neighbour, if not portraits of him. —There is a left arm again, though ;—no,—that is from the "Fighting Gladiator,"—the "*Jeune Héros combattant*" of the Louvre ;—there is the broad ring of the shield. From a cast, doubtless. [The separate casts of the "Gladiator's" arm look immense; but in its place the limb looks light, almost slender, —such is the perfection of that miraculous marble. I never felt as if I touched the life of the old Greeks until I looked on that statue.]—Here is something very odd, to be sure. An Eden of all the humped and crooked creatures! What could have been in her head when she worked out such a fantasy? She has contrived to give them all beauty or dignity or melancholy grace. A Bactrian camel lying under a palm. A dromedary flashing up the sands,—spray of

the dry ocean sailed by the "ship of the desert." A herd of buffaloes, uncouth, shaggy-maned, heavy in the forehand, light in the hind-quarter. [The buffalo is the *lion* of the ruminants.] And there is a Norman horse, with his huge, rough collar, echoing, as it were, the natural form of the other beast. And here are twisted serpents; and stately swans, with answering curves in their bowed necks, as if they had snake's blood under their white feathers; and grave, high-shouldered herons standing on one foot like cripples, and looking at life round them with the cold stare of monumental effigies.— A very odd page indeed! Not a creature in it without a curve or a twist, and not one of them a mean figure to look at. You can make your own comment; I am fanciful, you know. I believe she is trying to idealise what we vulgarly call deformity, which she strives to look at in the light of one of Nature's eccentric curves, belonging to her system of beauty, as the hyperbola and parabola belong to the conic sections, though we cannot see them as symmetrical and entire figures, like the circle and ellipse. At any rate, I cannot help referring this paradise of twisted spines to some idea floating in

her head connected with her friend whom Nature has warped in the moulding.—That is nothing to another transcendental fancy of mine. I believe her soul thinks itself in his little crooked body at times,—if it does not really get freed or half freed from her own. Did you ever see a case of catalepsy? You know what I mean,—transient loss of sense, will, and motion; body and limbs taking any position in which they are put, as if they belonged to a lay-figure. She had been talking with him and listening to him one day when the boarders moved from the table nearly all at once. But she sat as before, her cheek resting on her hand, her amber eyes wide open and still. I went to her,—she was breathing as usual, and her heart was beating naturally enough,—but she did not answer. I bent her arm; it was as plastic as softened wax, and kept the place I gave it.—This will never do, though,—and I sprinkled a few drops of water on her forehead. She started and looked round.—I have been in a dream, —she said;—I feel as if all my strength were in this arm;—give me your hand!— She took my right hand in her left, which looked soft and white enough, but—Good

Heaven ! I believe she will crack my bones ! All the nervous power in her body must have flashed through those muscles ; as when a crazy lady snaps her iron window-bars,—she who could hardly glove herself when in her common health. Iris turned pale, and the tears came to her eyes ; she saw she had given pain. Then she trembled, and might have fallen but for me ; the poor little soul had been in one of those trances that belong to the spiritual pathology of higher natures, mostly those of women.

To come back to this wondrous book of Iris. Two pages faced each other which I took for symbolical expressions of two states of mind. On the left hand, a bright blue sky washed over the page, specked with a single bird. No trace of earth, but still the winged creature seemed to be soaring upward and upward. Facing it, one of those black dungeons such as Piranesi alone of all men has pictured. I am sure she must have seen those awful prisons of his, out of which the Opium-Eater got his nightmare vision, described by another as "cemeteries of departed greatness, where monstrous and forbidden things are crawling and twining their slimy convolutions among mouldering bones,

broken sculpture, and mutilated inscriptions." Such a black dungeon faced the page that held the blue sky and the single bird; at the bottom of it something was coiled,—what, and whether meant for dead or alive, my eyes could not make out.

I told you the young girl's soul was in this book. As I turned over the last leaves I could not help starting. There were all sorts of faces among the arabesques which laughed and scowled in the borders that ran round the pages. They had mostly the outline of childish or womanly or manly beauty, without very distinct individuality. But at last it seemed to me that some of them were taking on a look not wholly unfamiliar to me; there were features that did not seem new.—Can it be so? Was there ever such innocence in a creature so full of life? She tells her heart's secrets as a three-years-old child betrays itself without need of being questioned! This was no common miss, such as are turned out in scores from the young-lady-factories, with parchments warranting them accomplished and virtuous,—in case anybody should question the fact. I began to understand her;—and what is so charming as to read the secret of a real *femme*

incomprise?—for such there are, though they are not the ones who think themselves uncomprehended women.

Poets are never young, in one sense. Their delicate ear hears the far-off whispers of eternity, which coarser souls must travel towards for scores of years before their dull sense is touched by them. A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience. I have frequently seen children, long exercised by pain and exhaustion, whose features had a strange look of advanced age. Too often one meets such in our charitable institutions. Their faces are saddened and wrinkled, as if their few summers were threescore years and ten.

And so many youthful poets have written as if their hearts were old before their time; their pensive morning twilight has been as cool and saddening as that of evening in more common lives. The profound melancholy of those lines of Shelley—

> "I could lie down like a tired child
> And weep away the life of care
> Which I have borne and yet must bear,"

came from a heart, as he says, "too soon grown old,"—at *twenty-six years*, as dull

people count time, even when they talk of poets.

I know enough to be prepared for an exceptional nature,—only this gift of the hand in rendering every thought in form and colour, as well as in words, gives a richness to this young girl's alphabet of feeling and imagery that takes me by surprise. And then besides, and most of all, I am puzzled at her sudden and seemingly easy confidence in me. Perhaps I owe it to my—— Well, no matter! How one must love the editor who first calls him the *venerable* So-and-so!

—I locked the book and sighed as I laid it down. The world is always ready to receive talent with open arms. Very often it does not know what to do with genius. Talent is a docile creature. It bows its head meekly while the world slips the collar over it. It backs into the shafts like a lamb. It draws its load cheerfully, and is patient of the bit and of the whip. But genius is always impatient of its harness; its wild blood makes it hard to train.

Talent seems, at first, in one sense, higher than genius,—namely, that it is more uniformly and absolutely submitted to the will, and therefore more distinctly human in its

character. Genius, on the other hand, is much more like those instincts which govern the admirable movements of the lower creatures, and therefore seems to have something of the lower or animal character. A goose flies by a chart which the Royal Geographical Society could not mend. A poet, like the goose, sails without visible landmarks to unexplored regions of truth, which philosophy has yet to lay down on its atlas. The philosopher gets his track by observa tion; the poet trusts to his inner sense, and makes the straighter and swifter line.

And yet, to look at it in another light, is not even the lowest instinct more truly divine than any voluntary human act done by the suggestion of reason? What is a bee's architecture but an *un*obstructed divine thought?—what is a builder's approximative rule but an obstructed thought of the Creator, a mutilated and imperfect copy of some absolute rule Divine Wisdom has established, transmitted through a human soul as an image through clouded glass?

Talent is a very common family-trait; genius belongs rather to individuals;—just as you find one giant or one dwarf in a family, but rarely a whole brood of either.

Talent is often to be envied, and genius very commonly to be pitied. It stands twice the chance of the other of dying in a hospital, in jail, in debt, in bad repute. It is a perpetual insult to mediocrity; its every word is a trespass against somebody's vested ideas, —blasphemy against somebody's *O'm*, or intangible private truth.

—What is the use of my weighing out antitheses in this way, like a rhetorical grocer?—You know twenty men of talent, who are making their way in the world; you may, perhaps, know one man of genius, and very likely do not want to know any more. For a divine instinct, such as drives the goose southward and the poet heavenward, is a hard thing to manage, and proves too strong for many whom it possesses. It must have been a terrible thing to have a friend like Chatterton or Burns. And here is a being who certainly has more than talent, at once poet and artist in tendency, if not yet fairly developed,—a woman, too; —and genius grafted on womanhood is like to overgrow it and break its stem, as you may see a grafted fruit-tree spreading over the stock which cannot keep pace with its evolution.

I think now you know something of this young person. She wants nothing but an atmosphere to expand in. Now and then one meets with a nature for which our hard, practical New England life is obviously utterly incompetent. It comes up, as a Southern seed, dropped by accident in one of our gardens, finds itself trying to grow and blow into flower among the homely roots and the hardy shrubs that surround it. There is no question that certain persons who are born among us find themselves many degrees too far north. Tropical by organisation, they cannot fight for life with our eastern and north-western breezes without losing the colour and fragrance into which their lives would have blossomed in the latitude of myrtles and oranges. Strange effects are produced by suffering any living thing to be developed under conditions such as Nature had not intended for it. A French physiologist confined some tadpoles under water in the dark. Removed from the natural stimulus of light, they did not develop legs and arms at the proper period of their growth, and so become frogs ; they swelled and spread into gigantic tadpoles. I have seen a hundred colossal *human* tad-

poles,—overgrown *larvæ* or embryos ; nay, I am afraid we Protestants should look on a considerable proportion of the Holy Father's one hundred and thirty-nine millions as spiritual *larvæ*, sculling about in the dark by the aid of their caudal extremities, instead of standing on their legs, and breathing by gills, instead of taking the free air of heaven into the lungs made to receive it. Of course *we* never try to keep young souls in the tadpole state, for fear they should get a pair or two of legs by-and-by and jump out of the pool where they have been bred and fed ! Never ! Never. Never ?

Now to go back to our plant. You may know, that, for the earlier stages of development of almost any vegetable, you only want air, water, light, and warmth. But by-and-by, if it is to have special complex principles as a part of its organisation, they must be supplied by the soil ;—your pears will crack if the root of the tree gets no iron,—your asparagus-bed wants salt as much as you do. Just at the period of adolescence, the mind often suddenly begins to come into flower and to set its fruit. Then it is that many young natures, having exhausted the spiritual soil round them of all it contains of the

elements they demand, wither away, undeveloped and uncoloured, unless they are transplanted.

Pray for these dear young souls! This is the second *natural* birth;—for I do not speak of those peculiar religious experiences which form the point of transition in many lives between the consciousness of a general relation to the Divine nature and a special personal relation. The litany should count a prayer for them in the list of its supplications; masses should be said for them as for souls in purgatory; all good Christians should remember them as they remember those in peril through travel or sickness or in warfare.

I would transport this child to Rome at once, if I had my will. She should ripen under an Italian sun. She should walk under the frescoed vaults of palaces, until her colours deepened to those of Venetian beauties, and her forms were perfected into rivalry with the Greek marbles, and the east wind was out of her soul. Has she not exhausted this lean soil of the elements her growing nature requires?

I do not know. The magnolia grows and comes into full flower on Cape Ann, many

degrees out of its proper region. I was riding once along that delicious road between the hills and the sea, when we passed a thicket where there seemed to be a chance of finding it. In five minutes I had fallen on the trees in full blossom, and filled my arms with the sweet, resplendent flowers. I could not believe that I was in our cold, northern Essex, which in the dreary season when I passed its slate-coloured, unpainted farm-houses, and huge, square, windy, 'squire-built "mansions," looks as brown and unvegetating as an old rug with its patterns all trodden out and the coloured fringe worn from all its border.

If the magnolia can bloom in northern New England, why should not a poet or a painter come to his full growth here just as well? Yes, but if the gorgeous tree-flower is rare, and only as if by a freak of Nature springs up in a single spot among the beeches and alders, is there not as much reason to think the perfumed flower of imaginative genius will find it hard to be born and harder to spread its leaves in the clear, cold atmosphere of our ultra-temperate zone of humanity.

Take the poet. On the one hand, I be-

lieve that a person with the poetical faculty finds material everywhere. The grandest objects of sense and thought are common to all climates and civilisations. The sky, the woods, the waters, the storms, life, death, love, the hope and vision of eternity,—these are images that write themselves in poetry in every soul which has anything of the divine gift.

On the other hand, there is such a thing as a lean, impoverished life, in distinction from a rich and suggestive one. Which our common New England life might be considered, I will not decide. But there are some things I think the poet misses in our western Eden. I trust it is not unpatriotic to mention them in this point of view, as they come before us in so many other aspects.

There is no sufficient flavour of humanity in the soil out of which we grow. At Cantabridge, near the sea, I have once or twice picked up an Indian arrowhead in a fresh furrow. At Canoe Meadow, in the Berkshire Mountains, I have found Indian arrowheads. So everywhere Indian arrowheads. Whether a hundred or a thousand years old, who knows? who cares? There

is no history to the red race,—there is hardly an individual in it;—a few instincts on legs and holding a tomahawk,—there is the Indian of all time. The story of one red ant is the story of all red ants. So, the poet, in trying to wing his way back through the life that has kindled, flitted, and faded along our watercourses and on our southern hillsides for unknown generations, finds nothing to breathe or fly in; he meets

"A vast vacuity! all unawares,
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep."

But think of the Old World,—that part of it which is the seat of ancient civilisation! The stakes of the Britons' stockades are still standing in the bed of the Thames. The ploughman turns up an old Saxon's bones, and beneath them is a tessellated pavement of the time of the Cæsars. In Italy, the works of mediæval Art seem to be of yesterday,—Rome, under her kings, is but an intruding new-comer, as we contemplate her in the shadow of the Cyclopean walls of Fiesole or Volterra. It makes a man human to live on these old humanised

soils. He cannot help marching in step with his kind in the rear of such a procession. They say a dead man's hand cures swellings, if laid on them. There is nothing like the dead cold hand of the past to take down our tumid egotism and lead us into the solemn flow of the life of our race. Rousseau came out of one of his sad self-torturing fits, as he cast his eye on the arches of the old Roman aqueduct, the Pont du Gard.

I am far from denying that there is an attraction in a thriving railroad village. The new "dépôt," the smartly-painted pine houses, the spacious brick hotel, the white meeting-house, and the row of youthful and leggy trees before it, *are* exhilarating. They speak of progress, and the time when there shall be a city, with a His Honour the Mayor, in the place of their trim but transient architectural growths. Pardon me, if I prefer the pyramids. They seem to me crystals formed from a stronger solution of humanity than the steeple of the new meeting-house. I may be wrong, but the Tiber has a voice for me, as it whispers to the piers of the Pons Ælius, even more full of meaning than my well-beloved Charles

eddying round the piles of West Boston Bridge.

Then, again, we Yankees are a kind of gypsies,—a mechanical and migratory race. A poet wants a home. He can dispense with an apple-parer and a reaping-machine. I feel this more for others than for myself, for the home of my birth and childhood has been as yet exempted from the change which has invaded almost everything around it.

—Pardon me a short digression. To what small things our memory and our affections attach themselves! I remember, when I was a child, that one of the girls planted some Star-of-Bethlehem bulbs in the south-west corner of our front-yard. Well, I left the paternal roof and wandered in other lands, and learned to think in the words of strange people. But after many years, as I looked on the little front-yard again, it occurred to me that there used to be some Stars-of-Bethlehem in the south-west corner. The grass was tall there, and the blade of the plant is very much like grass, only thicker and glossier. Even as Tully parted the briars and brambles when he hunted for the sphere-containing cylinder that marked the grave of Archimedes, so did I comb the grass with

my fingers for my monumental memorial-flower. Nature had stored my keepsake tenderly in her bosom; the glossy, faintly streaked blades were there; they are there still, though they never flower, darkened as they are by the shade of the elms and rooted in the matted turf.

Our hearts are held down to our homes by innumerable fibres, trivial as that I have just recalled; but Gulliver was fixed to the soil, you remember, by pinning his head a hair at a time. Even a stone with a whitish band crossing it, belonging to the pavement of the back-yard, insisted on becoming one of the talismans of memory. This intussusception of the ideas of inanimate objects, and their faithful storing away among the sentiments, are curiously prefigured in the material structure of the thinking centre itself. In the very core of the brain, in the part where Des Cartes placed the soul, is a small mineral deposit, consisting, as I have seen it in the microscope, of grape-like masses of crystalline matter.

But the plants that come up every year in the same place, like the Stars-of-Bethlehem, of all the lesser objects, give me the liveliest home-feeling. Close to our ancient

gambrel-roofed house is the dwelling of pleasant old Neighbour Walrus. I remember the sweet honeysuckle that I saw in flower against the wall of his house a few months ago, as long as I remember the sky and stars. That clump of peonies, butting their purple heads through the soil every spring in just the same circle, and by-and-by unpacking their hard balls of buds in flowers big enough to make a double handful of leaves, has come up in just that place, Neighbour Walrus tells me, for more years than I have passed on this planet. It is a rare privilege in our nomadic state to find the home of one's childhood and its immediate neighbourhood thus unchanged. Many born poets, I am afraid, flower poorly in song, or not at all, because they have been too often transplanted.

Then a good many of our race are very hard and unimaginative;—their voices have nothing caressing; their movements are as of machinery without elasticity or oil. I wish it were fair to print a letter a young girl, about the age of our Iris, wrote a short time since. "I am *** *** ***," she says, and tells her whole name outright. Ah!—said I, when I read that first frank

declaration,—you are one of the right sort! —She was. A winged creature among close-clipped barn-door fowl. How tired the poor girl was of the dull life about her,—the old woman's "skeleton hand" at the window opposite, drawing her curtains,—"Ma'am ——— *shooing* away the hens,"—the vacuous country eyes staring at her as only country eyes can stare,—a routine of mechanical duties,—and the soul's half-articulated cry for sympathy, without an answer! Yes,—pray for her, and for all such! Faith often cures their longings; but it is so hard to give a soul to heaven that has not first been trained in the fullest and sweetest human affections! Too often they fling their hearts away on unworthy objects. Too often they pine in a secret discontent, which spreads its leaden cloud over the morning of their youth. The immeasurable distance between one of these delicate natures and the average youths among whom is like to be her only choice makes one's heart ache. How many women are born too finely organised in sense and soul for the highway they must walk with feet unshod! Life is adjusted to the wants of the stronger sex. There are plenty of torrents to be crossed in its journey; but

their stepping-stones are measured by the stride of man, and not of woman.

Women are more subject than men to *atrophy of the heart.* So says the great medical authority, Laennec. Incurable cases of this kind used to find their hospitals in convents. We have the disease in New England,—but not the hospitals. I don't like to think of it. I will not believe our young Iris is going to die out in this way. Providence will find her some great happiness, or affliction, or duty, — and which would be best for her, I cannot tell. One thing is sure : the interest she takes in her little neighbour is getting to be more engrossing than ever. Something is the matter with him, and she knows it, and I think worries herself about it.

I wonder sometimes how so fragile and distorted a frame has kept the fiery spirit that inhabits it so long its tenant. He accounts for it in his own way.

The air of the Old World is good for nothing,—he said, one day.—Used up, Sir, —breathed over and over again. You must come to this side, Sir, for an atmosphere fit to breathe nowadays. Did not worthy Mr. Higginson say that a breath of New Eng-

land's air is better than a sup of Old England's ale? I ought to have died when I was a boy, Sir; but I couldn't die in this Boston air,—and I think I shall have to go to New York one of these days, when it 's time for me to drop this bundle,—or to New Orleans, where they have the yellow fever, —or to Philadelphia, where they have so many doctors.

This was some time ago; but of late he has seemed, as I have before said, to be ailing. An experienced eye, such as I think I may call mine, can tell commonly whether a man is going to die, or not, long before he or his friends are alarmed about him. I don't like it.

Iris has told me that the Scottish gift of second-sight runs in her family, and that she is afraid she has it. Those who are so endowed look upon a well man and see a shroud wrapt about him. According to the degree to which it covers him, his death will be near or more remote. It is an awful faculty; but science gives one too much like it. Luckily for our friends, most of us who have the scientific second-sight school ourselves not to betray our knowledge by word or look.

Day by day, as the Little Gentleman comes to the table, it seems to me that the shadow of some approaching change falls darker and darker over his countenance. Nature is struggling with something, and I am afraid she is under in the wrestling-match. You do not care much, perhaps, for my particular conjectures as to the nature of his difficulty. I should say, however, from the sudden flushes to which he is subject, and certain other marks which, as an expert, I know how to interpret, that his heart was in trouble; but then he presses his hand to the *right* side, as if there were the centre of his uneasiness.

When I say difficulty about the heart, I do not mean any of those sentimental maladies of that organ which figure more largely in romances than on the returns which furnish our Bills of Mortality. I mean some actual change in the organ itself, which may carry him off by slow and painful degrees, or strike him down with one huge pang and only time for a single shriek,—as when the shot broke through the brave Captain Nolan's breast, at the head of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, and with a loud cry he dropped dead from his saddle.

I thought it only fair to say something of what I apprehended to some who were entitled to be warned. The landlady's face fell when I mentioned my fears.

Poor man !—she said.—And will leave the best room empty ! Hasn't he got any sisters or nieces or anybody to see to his things, if he should be took away? Such a sight of cases, full of everything ! Never thought of his failin' so suddin. A complication of diseases, she expected. Liver-complaint one of 'em ?

After this first involuntary expression of the too natural selfish feelings (which we must not judge very harshly, unless we happen to be poor widows ourselves, with children to keep filled, covered, and taught,—rents high,—beef eighteen to twenty cents per pound),—after this first squeak of selfishness, followed by a brief movement of curiosity, so invariable in mature females, as to the nature of the complaint which threatens the life of a friend or any person who may happen to be mentioned as ill,—the worthy soul's better feelings struggled up to the surface, and she grieved for the doomed invalid, until a tear or two came forth and found their way down a channel

worn for them since the early days of her widowhood.

O this dreadful, dreadful business of being the prophet of evil! Of all the trials which those who take charge of others' health and lives have to undergo, this is the most painful. It is all so plain to the practised eye!—and there is the poor wife, the doting mother, who has never suspected anything, or at least has clung always to the hope which you are just going to wrench away from her!—I must tell Iris that I think her poor friend is in a precarious state. She seems nearer to him than anybody. I did tell her. Whatever emotion it produced, she kept a still face, except, perhaps, a little trembling of the lip.—Could I be certain that there was any mortal complaint?—Why, no, I could not be certain; but it looked alarming to me.—He shall have some of my life,—she said.

I suppose this to have been a fancy of hers, of a kind of magnetic power she could give out;—at any rate, I cannot help thinking she *wills* her strength away from herself, for she has lost vigour and colour from that day. I have sometimes thought he gained

the force she lost; but this may have been a whim, very probably.

One day she came suddenly to me, looking deadly pale. Her lips moved, as if she were speaking; but I could not at first hear a word. Her hair looked strangely, as if lifting itself, and her eyes were full of wild light. She sunk upon a chair, and I thought was falling into one of her trances. Something had frozen her blood with fear; I thought, from what she said, half audibly, that she believed she had seen a shrouded figure.

That night, at about eleven o'clock, I was sent for to see the Little Gentleman, who was taken suddenly ill. Bridget, the servant, went before me with a light. The doors were both unfastened, and I found myself ushered, without hindrance, into the dim light of the mysterious apartment I had so longed to enter.

I found these stanzas in the young girl's book, among many others. I give them as characterising the tone of her sadder moments.

UNDER THE VIOLETS.

Her hands are cold ; her face is white ;
  No more her pulses come and go ;
Her eyes are shut to life and light ;—
  Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,
  And lay her where the violets blow.

But not beneath a graven stone,
  To plead for tears with alien eyes ;
A slender cross of wood alone
  Shall say, that here a maiden lies
  In peace beneath the peaceful skies.

And grey old trees of hugest limb
  Shall wheel their circling shadows round
To make the scorching sunlight dim
  That drinks the greenness from the ground,
  And drop their dead leaves on her mound.

When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,
  And through their leaves the robins call,
And, ripening in the autumn sun,
  The acorns and the chestnuts fall,
  Doubt not that she will heed them all.

For her the morning choir shall sing
  Its matins from the branches high,
And every minstrel-voice of spring,
  That trills beneath the April sky,
  Shall greet her with its earliest cry.

When, turning round their dial-track,
  Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,
Her little mourners, clad in black,
  The crickets, sliding through the grass,
  Shall pipe for her an evening mass.

At last the rootlets of the trees
  Shall find the prison where she lies,
And bear the buried dust they seize
  In leaves and blossoms to the skies.
  So may the soul that warmed it rise !

If any, born of kindlier blood,
  Should ask, What maiden lies below ?
Say only this : A tender bud,
  That tried to blossom in the snow,
  Lies withered where the violets blow.

XI.

YOU will know, perhaps, in the course of half an hour's reading, what has been haunting my hours of sleep and waking for months. I cannot tell, of course, whether you are a nervous person or not. If, however, you are such a person,—if it is late at night,—if all the rest of the household have gone off to bed,—if the wind is shaking your windows as if a human hand were rattling the sashes,—if your candle or lamp is low and will soon burn out,—let me advise you to take up some good quiet sleepy volume, or attack the "Critical Notices" of the last Quarterly, and leave this to be read by daylight, with cheerful voices round, and people near by who would hear you, if you slid from your chair and came down in a lump on the floor.

I do not say that your heart will beat as mine did, I am willing to confess, when I entered the dim chamber. Did I not tell you that I was sensitive and imaginative,

and that I had lain awake with thinking what were the strange movements and sounds which I heard late at night in my little neighbour's apartment? It had come to that pass that I was truly unable to separate what I had really heard from what I had dreamed in those nightmares to which I have been subject, as before mentioned. So, when I walked into the room, and Bridget, turning back, closed the door and left me alone with its tenant, I do believe you could have grated a nutmeg on my skin, such a "goose-flesh" shiver ran over it. It was not fear, but what I call nervousness,—unreasoning, but irresistible; as when, for instance, one looking at the sun going down says, "I will count fifty before it disappears;" and as he goes on and it becomes doubtful whether he will reach the number, he gets strangely flurried, and his imagination pictures life and death and heaven and hell as the issues depending on the completion or non-completion of the fifty he is counting. Extreme curiosity will excite some people as much as fear, or what resembles fear, acts on some other less impressible natures.

I may find myself in the midst of strange facts in this little conjurer's room. Or,

again, there may be nothing in this poor invalid's chamber but some old furniture, such as they say came over in the *Mayflower*.

All this is just what I mean to find out while I am looking at the Little Gentleman, who has suddenly become my patient. The simplest things turn out to be unfathomable mysteries; the most mysterious appearances prove to be the most commonplace objects in disguise.

I wonder whether the boys who live in Roxbury and Dorchester are ever moved to tears or filled with silent awe as they look upon the rocks and fragments of "pudding-stone" abounding in those localities. I have my suspicions that those boys "heave a stone" or "fire a brickbat," composed of the conglomerate just mentioned, without any more tearful or philosophical contemplations than boys of less favoured regions expend on the same performance. Yet a lump of puddingstone is a thing to look at, to think about, to study over, to dream upon, to go crazy with, to beat one's brains out against. Look at that pebble in it. From what cliff was it broken? On what beach, rolled by the waves of what ocean? How and *when* embedded in soft ooze, which

itself became stone, and by-and-by was lifted into bald summits and steep cliffs, such as you may see on Meeting-house Hill any day—yes, and mark the scratches on their faces left when the boulder-carrying glaciers planed the surface of the continent with such rough tools that the storms have not worn the marks out of it with all the polishing of ever so many thousand years?

Or as you pass a roadside ditch or pool in spring-time, take from it any bit of stick or straw which has lain undisturbed for a time. Some little worm-shaped masses of clear jelly containing specks are fastened to the stick: eggs of a small snail-like shell-fish. One of these specks magnified proves to be a crystalline sphere with an opaque mass in its centre. And while you are looking, the opaque mass begins to stir, and by-and-by slowly to turn upon its axis like a forming planet,—life beginning in the microcosm, as in the great worlds of the firmament, with the revolution that turns the surface in ceaseless round to the source of life and light.

A pebble and the spawn of a mollusk! Before you have solved their mysteries, this earth where you first saw them may be a vitrified slag, or a vapour diffused through

the planetary spaces. Mysteries are common enough, at any rate, whatever the boys in Roxbury and Dorchester think of "brick-bats" and the spawn of creatures that live in roadside puddles.

But then a great many seeming mysteries are relatively perfectly plain, when we can get at them so as to turn them over. How many ghosts that "thick men's blood with cold" prove to be shirts hung out to dry! How many mermaids have been made out of seals! How many times have horse-mackerels been taken for the sea-serpent!

—Let me take the whole matter coolly, while I see what is the matter with the patient. That is what I say to myself, as I draw a chair to the bedside.—The bed is an old-fashioned, dark mahogany four-poster. It was never that which made the noise of something moving. It is too heavy to be pushed about the room.—The Little Gentleman was sitting, bolstered up by pillows, with his hands clasped and their united palms resting on the back of the head,—one of the three or four positions specially affected by persons whose breathing is difficult from disease of the heart or other causes.

Sit down, Sir,—he said,—sit down! I have come to the hill Difficulty, Sir, and am fighting my way up.—His speech was laborious and interrupted.

Don't talk,—I said,—except to answer my questions.—And I proceeded to "prospect" for the marks of some local mischief, which you know is at the bottom of all these attacks, though we do not always find it. I suppose I go to work pretty much like other professional folks of my temperament. Thus:—

Wrist, if you please.—I was on his right side, but he presented his left wrist, crossing it over the other.—I begin to count, holding watch in left hand. One, two, three, four, ——What a handsome hand!—wonder if that splendid stone is a carbuncle.—One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,——Can't see much, it is so dark, except one white object.—One, two, three, four,——Hang it! eighty or ninety in the minute, I guess.—Tongue, if you please.—Tongue is put out. Forget to look at it, or, rather, to take any particular notice of it;—but what *is* that white object, with the long arm stretching up as if pointing to the sky, just as Vesalius and Spigelius and those old fellows used to

put their skeletons? I don't think anything of such objects, you know; but what should *he* have it in his chamber for?—As I had found his pulse irregular and intermittent, I took out a stethoscope, which is a pocket-spyglass for looking into people's chests with your ears, and laid it over the place where the heart beats. I missed the usual beat of the organ.—How is this?—I said,—where is your heart gone to?—He took the stethoscope and shifted it across to the right side,—there was a displacement of the organ.—I am ill-packed,—he said;—there was no room for my heart in its place as it is with other men.—God help him!

It is hard to draw the line between scientific curiosity and the desire for the patient's sake to learn all the details of his condition. I must look at this patient's chest, and thump it and listen to it. For this is a case of *ectopia cordis*, my boy,—displacement of the heart; and it isn't every day you get a chance to overhaul such an interesting malformation. And so I managed to do my duty and satisfy my curiosity at the same time. The torso was slight and deformed; the right arm attenuated,—the left full, round, and of perfect symmetry. It had

run away with the life of the other limbs,—a common trick enough of Nature's, as I told you before. If you see a man with legs withered from childhood, keep out of the way of his arms, if you have a quarrel with him. He has the strength of four limbs in two ; and if he strikes you, it is an arm-blow *plus* a kick administered from the shoulder instead of the haunch, where it should have started from.

Still examining him as a patient, I kept my eyes about me to search all parts of the chamber, and went on with the double process, as before.—Heart hits as hard as a fist, —*bellows-sound over mitral valves* (professional terms you need not attend to).—What the deuce is that long case for? Got his witch grandmother mummied in it? And three big mahogany presses,—hey?—A diabolical suspicion came over me which I had had once before,—that he might be one of our modern *alchemists*,—you understand,—make gold, you know, or *what looks like it*, sometimes with the head of a king or queen or of Líberty to embellish one side of the piece.—Don't I remember hearing him shut a door and lock it once? What do you think was kept under that lock? Let 's have

another look at his hand, to see if there are any calluses. One can tell a man's business, if it is a handicraft, very often by just taking a look at his open hand.—Ah! Four calluses at the end of the fingers of the right hand. None on those of the left. Ah, ha! What do those mean?

All this seems longer in the telling, of course, than it was in fact. While I was making these observations of the objects around me, I was also forming my opinion as to the kind of case with which I had to deal.

There are three wicks, you know, to the lamp of a man's life: brain, blood, and breath. Press the brain a little, its light goes out, followed by both the others. Stop the heart a minute, and out go all three of the wicks. Choke the air out of the lungs, and presently the fluid ceases to supply the other centres of flame, and all is soon stagnation, cold, and darkness. The "tripod of life" a French physiologist called these three organs. It is all clear enough which leg of the tripod is going to break down here. I could tell you exactly what the difficulty is;—which would be as intelligible and amusing as a watchmaker's description of a diseased timekeeper

to a ploughman. It is enough to say, that I found just what I expected to, and that I think this attack is only the prelude of more serious consequences, — which expression means you very well know what.

And now the secrets of this life hanging on a thread must surely come out. If I have made a mystery where there was none, my suspicions will be shamed, as they have often been before. If this is anything strange, my visits will clear it up.

I sat an hour or two by the side of the Little Gentleman's bed, after giving him some henbane to quiet his brain, and some foxglove, which an imaginative French professor has called the "Opium of the Heart." Under their influence he gradually fell into an uneasy, half-waking slumber, the body fighting hard for every breath, and the mind wandering off in strange fancies and old recollections, which escaped from his lips in broken sentences.

—The last of 'em,—he said,—the last of 'em all,—thank God! And the grave he lies in will look just as well as if he had been straight. Dig it deep, old Martin, dig it deep,—and let it be as long as other folks' graves. And mind you get the sods flat, old

man,—flat as ever a straight-backed young fellow was laid under. And then, with a good tall slab at the head, and a footstone six foot away from it, it 'll look just as if there was a man underneath.

A man ! Who said he was a man ? No more men of that pattern to bear *his* name ! —Used to be a good-looking set enough.— Where 's all the manhood and womanhood gone to since his great-grandfather was the strongest man that sailed out of the town of Boston, and poor Leah there the handsomest woman in Essex, if she was a witch ?

—Give me some light,—he said,—more light.—I want to see the picture.

He had started either from a dream or a wandering reverie. I was not unwilling to have more light in the apartment, and presently had lighted an astral lamp that stood on a table.—He pointed to a portrait hanging against the wall.—Look at her,—he said, —look at her ! Wasn't that a pretty neck to slip a hangman's noose over ?

The portrait was of a young woman, something more than twenty years old, perhaps. There were few pictures of any merit painted in New England before the time of Smibert, and I am at a loss to know what

artist could have taken this half-length, which was evidently from life. It was somewhat stiff and flat, but the grace of the figure and the sweetness of the expression reminded me of the angels of the early Florentine painters. She must have been of some consideration, for she was dressed in paduasoy and lace with hanging sleeves, and the old carved frame showed how the picture had been prized by its former owners. A proud eye she had, with all her sweetness. —I think it was that which hanged her, as his strong arm hanged Minister George Burroughs ;—but it may have been a little mole on one cheek, which the artist had just hinted as a beauty rather than a deformity. You know, I suppose, that nursling imps addict themselves, after the fashion of young opossums, to these little excrescences. "Witch-marks" were good evidence that a young woman was one of the devil's wet-nurses ;—I should like to have seen you make fun of them in those days !—Then she had a brooch in her bodice, that might have been taken for some devilish amulet or other ; and she wore a ring upon one of her fingers, with a red stone in it, that flamed as if the painter had dipped his pencil in fire ;—

who knows but that it was given her by a midnight suitor fresh from that fierce element, and licensed for a season to leave his couch of flame to tempt the unsanctified hearts of earthly maidens and brand their cheeks with the print of his scorching kisses?

She and I,—he said, as he looked steadfastly at the canvas,—she and I are the last of 'em.—She will stay, and I shall go. They never painted me,— except when the boys used to make pictures of me with chalk on the board-fences. They said the doctors would want my skeleton when I was dead. —You are my friend, if you are a doctor,— a'n't you?

I just gave him my hand. I had not the heart to speak.

I want to lie still,—he said,—after I am put to bed upon the hill yonder. Can't you have a great stone laid over me, as they did over the first settlers in the old burying-ground at Dorchester, so as to keep the wolves from digging them up? I never slept easy over the sod;—I should like to lie quiet under it. And besides,—he said, in a kind of scared whisper,—I don't want to have my bones stared at, as my body

has been. I don't doubt I was a *remarkable case;* but, for God's sake, oh! for God's sake, don't let 'em make a show of the cage I have been shut up in and looked through the bars of for so many years!

I have heard it said that the art of healing makes men hard-hearted and indifferent to human suffering. I am willing to own that there is often a professional hardness in surgeons, just as there is in theologians, —only much less in degree than in these last. It does not commonly improve the sympathies of a man to be in the habit of thrusting knives into his fellow-creatures and burning them with red-hot irons, any more than it improves them to hold the blinding-white cautery of Gehenna by its cool handle and score and crisp young souls with it until they are scorched into the belief of—Transubstantiation or the Immaculate Conception. And, to say the plain truth, I think there are a good many coarse people in both callings. A delicate nature will not commonly choose a pursuit which implies the habitual infliction of suffering, so readily as some gentler office. Yet, while I am writing this paragraph, there passes by my window, on his daily errand of duty, not seeing me,

though I catch a glimpse of his manly features through the oval glass of his chaise, as he rides by, a surgeon of skill and standing, so friendly, so modest, so tender-hearted in all his ways, that, if he had not approved himself at once adroit and firm, one would have said he was of too kindly a mould to be the minister of pain, even if it were saving pain.

You may be sure that some men, even among those who have chosen the task of pruning their fellow-creatures, grow more and more thoughtful and truly compassionate in the midst of their cruel experience. They become less nervous, but more sympathetic. They have a truer sensibility for others' pain, the more they study pain and disease in the light of science. I have said this without claiming any special growth in humanity for myself, though I do hope I grow tenderer in my feelings as I grow older. At any rate, this was not a time in which professional habits could keep down certain instincts of older date than these.

This poor little man's appeal to my humanity against the supposed rapacity of Science, which he feared would have her "specimen," if his ghost should walk rest-

lessly a thousand years, waiting for his bones to be laid in the dust, touched my heart. But I felt bound to speak cheerily.

—We don't die yet a while, if we can help it,—I said,—and I trust we can help it. But don't be afraid ; if I live longest, I will see that your resting-place is kept sacred till the dandelions and buttercups blow over you.

He seemed to have got his wits together by this time, and to have a vague consciousness that he might have been saying more than he meant for anybody's ears.—I have been talking a little wild, Sir, eh ?—he said. —There is a great buzzing in my head with those drops of yours, and I doubt if my tongue has not been a little looser than I would have it, Sir. But I don't much want to live, Sir ; that 's the truth of the matter ; and it does rather please me to think that fifty years from now nobody will know that the place where I lie doesn't hold as stout and straight a man as the best of 'em that stretch out as if they were proud of the room they take. You may get me well, if you can, Sir, if you think it worth while to try ; but I tell you there has been no time for this many a year when the smell of fresh

earth was not sweeter to me than all the flowers that grow out of it. There 's no anodyne like your good clean gravel, Sir. But if you can keep me about a while, and it amuses you to try, you may show your skill upon me, if you like. There is a pleasure or two that I love the daylight for, and I think the night is not far off, at best.—I believe I shall sleep now ; you may leave me, and come, if you like, in the morning.

Before I passed out I took one more glance round the apartment. The beautiful face of the portrait looked at me, as portraits often do, with a frightful kind of intelligence in its eyes. The drapery fluttered on the still outstretched arm of the tall object near the window ;—a crack of this was open, no doubt, and some breath of wind stirred the hanging folds. In my excited state, I seemed to see something ominous in that arm pointing to the heavens. I thought of the figures in the Dance of Death at Basle, and that other on the panels of the covered Bridge at Lucerne ; and it seemed to me that the grim mask who mingles with every crowd and glides over every threshold was pointing the sick man to his far home, and would soon stretch out his bony hand and lead him or

drag him on the unmeasured journey towards it.

The fancy had possession of me, and I shivered again as when I first entered the chamber. The picture and the shrouded shape ; I saw only these two objects. They were enough. The house was deadly still, and the night-wind, blowing through an open window, struck me as from a field of ice, at the moment I passed into the creaking corridor. As I turned into the common passage, a white figure, holding a lamp, stood full before me. I thought at first it was one of those images made to stand in niches and hold a light in their hands. But the illusion was momentary, and my eyes speedily recovered from the shock of the bright flame and snowy drapery to see that the figure was a breathing one. It was Iris, in one of her statue-trances. She had come down, whether sleeping or waking, I knew not at first, led by an instinct that told her she was wanted,—or, possibly, having overheard and interpreted the sound of our movements,—or, it may be, having learned from the servant that there was trouble which might ask for a woman's hand. I sometimes think women have a sixth sense,

which tells them that others, whom they cannot see or hear, are in suffering. How surely we find them at the bedside of the dying! How strongly does Nature plead for them, that we should draw our first breath in their arms, as we sigh away our last upon their faithful breasts!

With white, bare feet, her hair loosely knotted, clad as the starlight knew her, and the morning when she rose from slumber, save that she had twisted a scarf round her long dress, she stood still as a stone before me, holding in one hand a lighted coil of wax-taper, and in the other a silver goblet. I held my own lamp close to her, as if she had been a figure of marble, and she did not stir. There was no breach of propriety then, to scare the Poor Relation with and breed scandal out of. She had been "warned in a dream," doubtless suggested by her waking knowledge and the sounds which had reached her exalted sense. There was nothing more natural than that she should have risen and girdled her waist, and lighted her taper, and found the silver goblet with "*Ex dono pupillorum*" on it, from which she had taken her milk and possets through all her childish years, and so gone blindly out to

find her place at the bedside,—a Sister of Charity without the cap and rosary; nay, unknowing whither her feet were leading her, and with wide, blank eyes seeing nothing but the vision that beckoned her along.—Well, I must wake her from her slumber or trance.—I called her name, but she did not heed my voice.

The Devil put it into my head that I would kiss one handsome young girl before I died, and now was my chance. She never would know it, and I should carry the remembrance of it with me into the grave, and a rose perhaps grow out of my dust, as a briar did out of Lord Lovel's, in memory of that immortal moment! Would it wake her from her trance? and would she see me in the flush of my stolen triumph, and hate and despise me ever after? Or should I carry off my trophy undetected, and always from that time say to myself, when I looked upon her in the glory of youth and splendour of beauty, "My lips have touched those roses, and made their sweetness mine for ever"? You think my cheek was flushed, perhaps, and my eyes were glittering with this midnight flash of opportunity. On the contrary, I believe I was pale, very pale,

and I know that I trembled. Ah, it is the pale passions that are the fiercest,—it is the violence of the chill that gives the measure of the fever! The fighting-boy of our school always turned white when he went out to a pitched battle with the bully of some neighbouring village; but we knew what his bloodless cheeks meant,—the blood was all in his stout heart,—he was a slight boy, and there was not enough to redden his face and fill his heart both at once.

Perhaps it is making a good deal of a slight matter, to tell the internal conflicts in the heart of a quiet person something more than juvenile and something less than senile, as to whether he should be guilty of an impropriety, and, if he were, whether he would get caught in his indiscretion. And yet the memory of the kiss that Margaret of Scotland gave to Alain Chartier has lasted four hundred years, and put it into the head of many an ill-favoured poet, whether Victoria, or Eugénie would do so much by him if she happened to pass him when he was asleep. And have we ever forgotten that the fresh cheek of the young John Milton tingled under the lips of some high-born Italian beauty, who, I believe, did not think to

leave her card by the side of the slumbering youth, but she bequeathed the memory of her pretty deed to all coming time? The sound of a kiss is not so loud as that of a cannon, but its echo lasts a deal longer.

There is one disadvantage which the man of philosophical habits of mind suffers, as compared with the man of action. While he is taking an enlarged and rational view of the matter before him, he lets his chance slip through his fingers. Iris woke up, of her own accord, before I had made up my mind what I was going to do about it.

When I remember how charmingly she looked, I don't blame myself at all for being tempted; but if I had been fool enough to yield to the impulse, I should certainly have been ashamed to tell of it. She did not know what to make of it, finding herself there alone, in such guise, and me staring at her. She looked down at her white robe and bare feet, and coloured,—then at the goblet she held in her hand,—then at the taper; and at last her thoughts seemed to clear up.

I know it all,—she said.—He is going to die, and I must go and sit by him. Nobody will care for him as I shall, and I have nobody else to care for.

I assured her that nothing was needed for him that night but rest, and persuaded her that the excitement of her presence could only do harm. Let him sleep, and he would very probably awake better in the morning. There was nothing to be said, for I spoke with authority; and the young girl glided away with noiseless step and sought her own chamber.

The tremor passed away from my limbs, and the blood began to burn in my cheeks. The beautiful image which had so bewitched me faded gradually from my imagination, and I returned to the still perplexing mysteries of my little neighbour's chamber. All was still there now. No plaintive sounds, no monotonous murmurs, no shutting of windows and doors at strange hours, as if something or somebody were coming in or going out, or there was something to be hidden in those dark mahogany presses. Is there an inner apartment that I have not seen? The way in which the house is built might admit of it. As I thought it over, I at once imagined a Bluebeard's chamber. Suppose, for instance, that the narrow bookshelves to the right are really only a masked door, such as we remember leading to the

private study of one of our most distinguished townsmen, who loved to steal away from his stately library to that little silent cell. If this were lighted from above, a person or persons might pass their days there without attracting attention from the household, and wander where they pleased at night,—to Copp's-Hill burial-ground, if they liked,—I said to myself, laughing, and pulling the bedclothes over my head. There is no logic in superstitious fancies any more than in dreams. A she-ghost wouldn't want an inner chamber to herself. A live woman, with a valuable soprano voice, wouldn't start off at night to sprain her ankles over the old graves of the North-End Cemetery.

It is all very easy for you, middle-aged reader, sitting over this page in the broad daylight, to call me by all manner of asinine and anserine unchristian names, because I had these fancies running through my head. I don't care much for your abuse. The question is not, what it is reasonable for a man to think about, but what he actually does think about, in the dark, and when he is alone, and his whole body seems but one great nerve of hearing, and he sees the phosphorescent flashes of his own eyeballs

as they turn suddenly in the direction of the last strange noise,— what he actually does think about, as he lies and recalls all the wild stories his head is full of, his fancy hinting the most alarming conjectures to account for the simplest facts about him, his common-sense laughing them to scorn the next minute, but his mind still returning to them, under one shape or another, until he gets very nervous and foolish, and remembers how pleasant it used to be to have his mother come and tuck him up and go and sit within call, so that she could hear him at any minute, if he got very much scared and wanted her. Old babies that we are !

Daylight will clear up all that lamplight has left doubtful. I longed for the morning to come, for I was more curious than ever. So, between my fancies and anticipations, I had but a poor night of it, and came down tired to the breakfast-table. My visit was not to be made until after this morning hour ;— there was nothing urgent, so the servant was ordered to tell me.

It was the first breakfast at which the high chair at the side of Iris had been unoccupied.—You might jest as well take away

that chair,—said our landlady,—he 'll never want it again. He acts like a man that 's struck with death, 'n' I don't believe he 'll ever come out of his chamber till he 's laid out and brought down a corpse.—These good women do put things so plainly! There were two or three words in her short remark that always sober people, and suggest silence or brief moral reflections.

—Life is dreadful uncerting,—said the Poor Relation,—and pulled in her social tentacles to concentrate her thoughts on this fact of human history.

—If there was anything a fellah could do,—said the young man John, so called,—a fellah 'd like the chance o' helpin' a little cripple like that. He looks as if he couldn't turn over any handier than a turtle that 's laid on his back; and I guess there a'n't many people that know how to lift better than I do. Ask him if he don't want any watchers. I don't mind settin' up any more 'n' a cat-owl. I was up all night twice last month.

[My private opinion is, that there was no small amount of punch absorbed on those two occasions, which I think I heard of at the time;—but the offer is a kind one, and

it isn't fair to question how he would like sitting up without the punch and the company and the songs and smoking. He means what he says, and it would be a more considerable achievement for him to sit quietly all night by a sick man than for a good many other people. I tell you this odd thing: there are a good many persons, who, through the habit of making other folks uncomfortable, by finding fault with all their cheerful enjoyments, at last get up a kind of hostility to comfort in general, even in their own persons. The correlative to loving our neighbours as ourselves is hating ourselves as we hate our neighbours. Look at old misers; first they starve their dependants, and then themselves. So I think it more for a lively young fellow to be ready to play nurse than for one of those useful but forlorn martyrs who have taken a spite against themselves and love to gratify it by fasting and watching.]

—The time came at last for me to make my visit. I found Iris sitting by the Little Gentleman's pillow. To my disappointment, the room was darkened. He did not like the light, and would have the shutters kept nearly closed. It was good enough for me; —what business had I to be indulging my

curiosity, when I had nothing to do but to exercise such skill as I possessed for the benefit of my patient? There was not much to be said or done in such a case; but I spoke as encouragingly as I could, as I think we are always bound to do. He did not seem to pay any very anxious attention, but the poor girl listened as if her own life and more than her own life were depending on the words I uttered. She followed me out of the room, when I had got through my visit.

How long?—she said.

Uncertain. Any time; to-day, — next week,—next month,—I answered. One of those cases where the issue is not doubtful, but may be sudden or slow.

The women of the house were kind, as women always are in trouble. But Iris pretended that nobody could spare the time as well as she, and kept her place hour after hour, until the landlady insisted that she 'd be killin' herself, if she begun at that rate, 'n' haf to give up, if she didn't want to be clean beat out in less 'n a week.

At the table we were graver than common. The high chair was set back against the wall, and a gap left between that of the young

girl and her nearest neighbour's on the right. But the next morning, to our great surprise, that good-looking young Marylander had very quietly moved his own chair to the vacant place. I thought he was creeping down that way, but I was not prepared for a leap spanning such a tremendous parenthesis of boarders as this change of position included. There was no denying that the youth and maiden were a handsome pair, as they sat side by side. But whatever the young girl may have thought of her new neighbour, she never seemed for a moment to forget the poor little friend who had been taken from her side. There are women, and even girls, with whom it is of no use to talk. One might as well reason with a bee as to the form of his cell, or with an oriole as to the construction of his swinging nest, as try to stir these creatures from their own way of doing their own work. It was not a question with Iris, whether she was entitled by any special relation or by the fitness of things to play the part of a nurse. She was a wilful creature that must have her way in this matter. And it so proved that it called for much patience and long endurance to carry through the duties, say rather the

kind offices, the painful pleasures, which she had chosen as her share in the household where accident had thrown her. She had that genius of ministration which is the special province of certain women, marked even among their helpful sisters by a soft, low voice, a quiet footfall, a light hand, a cheering smile, and a ready self-surrender to the objects of their care, which such trifles as their own food, sleep, or habits of any kind never presume to interfere with.

Day after day, and too often through the long watches of the night, she kept her place by the pillow.—That girl will kill herself over me, Sir,—said the poor Little Gentleman to me, one day,—she will kill herself, Sir, if you don't call in all the resources of your art to get me off as soon as may be. I shall wear her out, Sir, with sitting in this close chamber and watching when she ought to be sleeping, if you leave me to the care of Nature without dosing me.

This was rather strange pleasantry, under the circumstances. But there are certain persons whose existence is so out of parallel with the larger laws in the midst of which it is moving, that life becomes to them as death and death as life.—How am I getting

along?—he said, another morning. He lifted his shrivelled hand, with the death's-head ring on it, and looked at it with a sad sort of complacency. By this one movement, which I have seen repeatedly of late, I know that his thoughts have gone before to another condition, and that he is, as it were, looking back on the infirmities of the body as accidents of the past. For, when he was well, one might see him often looking at the handsome hand with the flaming jewel on one of its fingers. The single well-shaped limb was the source of that pleasure which in some form or other Nature almost always grants to her least richly endowed children. Handsome hair, eyes, complexion, feature, form, hand, foot, pleasant voice, strength, grace, agility, intelligence,—how few there are that have not just enough of one at least of these gifts to show them that the good Mother, busy with her millions of children, has not quite forgotten them! But now he was thinking of that other state, where, free from all mortal impediments, the memory of his sorrowful burden should be only as that of the case he has shed to the insect whose "deep-damasked wings" beat off the golden dust of the lily-anthers, as he flutters

in the ecstasy of his new life over their full-blown summer glories.

No human being can rest for any time in a state of equilibrium, where the desire to live and that to depart just balance each other. If one has a house, which he has lived and always means to live in, he pleases himself with the thought of all the conveniences it offers him, and thinks little of its wants and imperfections. But once having made up his mind to move to a better, every incommodity starts out upon him, until the very ground-plan of it seems to have changed in his mind, and his thoughts and affections, each one of them packing up its little bundle of circumstances, have quitted their several chambers and nooks and migrated to the new home, long before its apartments are ready to receive their bodily tenant. It is so with the body. Most persons have died before they expire, —died to all earthly longings, so that the last breath is only, as it were, the locking of the door of the already deserted mansion. The fact of the tranquillity with which the great majority of dying persons await this locking of those gates of life through which its airy angels have been going and coming,

from the moment of the first cry, is familiar to those who have been often called upon to witness the last period of life. Almost always there is a preparation made by Nature for unearthing a soul, just as on the smaller scale there is for the removal of a milk-tooth. The roots which hold human life to earth are absorbed before it is lifted from its place. Some of the dying are weary and want rest, the idea of which is almost inseparable in the universal mind from death. Some are in pain, and want to be rid of it, even though the anodyne be dropped, as in the legend, from the sword of the Death-Angel. Some are stupid, mercifully narcotised that they may go to sleep without long tossing about. And some are strong in faith and hope, so that, as they draw near the next world, they would fain hurry toward it, as the caravan moves faster over the sands when the foremost travellers send word along the file that water is in sight. Though each little party that follows in a foot-track of its own will have it that the water to which others think they are hastening is a mirage, not the less has it been true in all ages and for human beings of every creed which recognised a future, that those

who have fallen worn out by their march through the Desert have dreamed at least of a River of Life, and thought they heard its murmurs as they lay dying.

The change from the clinging to the present to the welcoming of the future comes very soon, for the most part, after all hope of life is extinguished, provided this be left in good degree to Nature, and not insolently and cruelly forced upon those who are attacked by illness, on the strength of that odious foreknowledge often imparted by science, before the white fruit whose core is ashes, and which we call *death*, has set beneath the pallid and drooping flower of sickness. There is a singular sagacity very often shown in a patient's estimate of his own vital force. His physician knows the state of his material frame well enough, perhaps,—that this or that organ is more or less impaired or disintegrated; but the patient has a sense that he can hold out so much longer,—sometimes that he must and will live for a while, though by the logic of disease he ought to die without any delay.

The Little Gentleman continued to fail, until it became plain that his remaining days were few. I told the household what

to expect. There was a good deal of kind feeling expressed among the boarders, in various modes, according to their characters and style of sympathy. The landlady was urgent that he should try a certain nostrum which had saved somebody's life in jest sech a case. The Poor Relation wanted me to carry, as from her, a copy of *Allein's Alarm*, etc. I objected to the title, reminding her that it offended people of old, so that more than twice as many of the book were sold when they changed the name to *A Sure Guide to Heaven*. The good old gentleman whom I have mentioned before has come to the time of life when many old men cry easily, and forget their tears as children do. —He was a worthy gentleman,—he said,— a very worthy gentleman, but unfortunate, —very unfortunate. Sadly deformed about the spine and the feet. Had an impression that the late Lord Byron had some malformation of this kind. Had heerd there was something the matter with the ankle-j'ints of that nobleman, but he was a man of talents. This gentleman seemed to be a man of talents. Could not always agree with his statements,—thought he was a little over-partial to this city, and had some

free opinions; but was sorry to lose him,—and if—there was anything—he—could—— —— ——. In the midst of these kind expressions, the gentleman with the *diamond*, the Koh-i-noor, as we called him, asked, in a very unpleasant sort of way, how the old boy was likely to cut up,—meaning what money our friend was going to leave behind.

The young fellow John spoke up, to the effect that this was a diabolish snobby question, when a man was dying and not dead.—To this the Koh-i-noor replied, by asking if the other meant to insult him.—Whereto the young man John rejoined that he had no particul'r intentions one way or t' other.—The Koh-i-noor then suggested the young man's stepping out into the yard, that he, the speaker, might "slap his chops."—Let 'em alone,—said young Maryland,—it 'll soon be over, and they won't hurt each other much.—So they went out.

The Koh-i-noor entertained the very common idea, that, when one quarrels with another, the simple thing to do is to *knock the man down*, and there is the end of it. Now those who have watched such encounters are aware of two things: first, that

it is not so easy to knock a man down as it is to talk about it; secondly, that, if you do happen to knock a man down, there is a very good chance that he will be angry, and get up and give you a thrashing.

So the Koh-i-noor thought he would begin, as soon as they got into the yard, by knocking his man down, and with this intention swung his arm round after the fashion of rustics and those unskilled in the noble art, expecting the young fellow John to drop when his fist, having completed a quarter of a circle, should come in contact with the side of that young man's head. Unfortunately for this theory, it happens that a blow struck out straight is as much shorter, and therefore as much quicker, than the rustic's swinging blow, as the radius is shorter than the quarter of a circle. The mathematical and mechanical corollary was, that the Koh-i-noor felt something hard bring up suddenly against his right eye, which something he could have sworn was a paving-stone, judging by his sensations; and as this threw his person somewhat backwards, and the young man John jerked his own head back a little, the swinging blow had nothing to stop it; and as the Jewel

staggered between the hit he got and the blow he missed, he tripped and "went to grass," so far as the back-yard of our boarding-house was provided with that vegetable. It was a signal illustration of that fatal mistake, so frequent in young and ardent natures with inconspicuous calves and negative pectorals, that they can settle most little quarrels on the spot by "knocking the man down."

We are in the habit of handling our faces so carefully, that a heavy blow, taking effect on that portion of the surface, produces a most unpleasant surprise, which is accompanied with odd sensations, as of seeing sparks, and a kind of electrical or ozone-like odours, half-sulphurous in character, and which has given rise to a very vulgar and profane threat sometimes heard from the lips of bullies. A person not used to pugilistic gestures does not instantly recover from this surprise. The Koh-i-noor, exasperated by his failure, and still a little confused by the smart hit he had received, but furious, and confident of victory over a young fellow a good deal lighter than himself, made a desperate rush to bear down all before him and finish the contest at once.

That is the way all angry greenhorns and incompetent persons attempt to settle matters. It doesn't do, if the other fellow is only cool, moderately quick, and has a very little science. It didn't do this time; for, as the assailant rushed in with his arms flying everywhere, like the vans of a windmill, he ran a prominent feature of his face against a fist which was travelling in the other direction, and immediately after struck the knuckles of the young man's other fist a severe blow with the part of his person known as the *epigastrium* to one branch of science and the *bread-basket* to another. This second round closed the battle. The Koh-i-noor had got enough, which in such cases is more than as good as a feast. The young fellow asked him if he was satisfied, and held out his hand. But the other sulked, and muttered something about revenge.—Jest as y' like,—said the young man John. —Clap a slice o' raw beefsteak on to that mouse o' yours 'n' 't'll take down the swellin' (*Mouse* is a technical term for a bluish, oblong, rounded elevation occasioned by running one's forehead or eyebrow against another's knuckles.) The young fellow was particularly pleased that he had had an

opportunity of trying his proficiency in the art of self-defence without the gloves. The Koh-i-noor did not favour us with his company for a day or two, being confined to his chamber, *it was said*, by a *slight feverish attack*. He was chop-fallen always after this, and got negligent in his person. The impression must have been a deep one; for it was observed, that, when he came down again, his moustache and whiskers had turned visibly white—*about the roots*. In short, it disgraced him, and rendered still more conspicuous a tendency to drinking, of which he had been for some time suspected. This, and the disgust which a young lady naturally feels at hearing that her lover has been "licked by a fellah not half his size," induced the landlady's daughter to take that decided step which produced a change in the programme of her career I may hereafter allude to.

I never thought he would come to good, when I heard him attempting to sneer at an unoffending city so respectable as Boston. After a man begins to attack the State-House, when he gets bitter about the Frog-Pond, you may be sure there is not much left of him. Poor Edgar Poe died in the

hospital soon after he got into this way of talking ; and so sure as you find an unfortunate fellow reduced to this pass, you had better begin praying for him, and stop lending him money, for he is on his last legs. Remember poor Edgar ! He is dead and gone ; but the State-House has its cupola fresh-gilded, and the Frog-Pond has got a fountain that squirts up a hundred feet into the air, and glorifies that humble sheet with a fine display of provincial rainbows.

—I cannot fulfil my promise in this number. I expected to gratify your curiosity, if you have become at all interested in these puzzles, doubts, fancies, whims, or whatever you choose to call them, of mine. Next month you shall hear all about it.

—It was evening, and I was going to the sick-chamber. As I paused at the door before entering, I heard a sweet voice singing. It was not the wild melody I had sometimes heard at midnight :—no, this was the voice of Iris, and I could distinguish every word. I had seen the verses in her book ; the melody was new to me. Let me finish my page with them.

HYMN OF TRUST.

O Love Divine, that stooped to share
  Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On Thee we cast each earthborn care,
  We smile at pain while Thou art near!

Though long the weary way we tread,
  And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
  Our hearts still whispering, Thou art near!

When drooping pleasure turns to grief,
  And trembling faith is changed to fear,
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf
  Shall softly tell us, Thou art near!

On Thee we fling our burdening woe,
  O Love Divine, for ever dear,
Content to suffer, while we know,
  Living and dying, Thou art near!

XII.

A YOUNG fellow, born of good stock, in one of the more thoroughly civilized portions of these United States of America, bred in good principles, inheriting a social position which makes him at his ease everywhere, means sufficient to educate him thoroughly without taking away the stimulus to vigorous exertion, and with a good opening in some honourable path of labour, is the finest sight our private satellite has had the opportunity of inspecting on the planet to which she belongs. In some respects it was better to be a young Greek. If we may trust the old marbles,—my friend with his arm stretched over my head, above there (in plaster of Paris), or the discobolus, whom one may see at the principal sculpture gallery of this metropolis, — those Greek young men were of supreme beauty. Their close curls, their elegantly set heads, column-like necks, straight noses, short, curled lips, firm chins, deep chests, light flanks, large

muscles, small joints, were finer than anything we ever see. It may well be questioned whether the human shape will ever present itself again in a race of such perfect symmetry. But the life of the youthful Greek was local, not planetary, like that of the young American. He had a string of legends, in place of our Gospels. He had no printed books, no newspaper, no steam caravans, no forks, no soap, none of the thousand cheap conveniences which have become matters of necessity to our modern civilisation. Above all things, if he aspired to know as well as to enjoy, he found knowledge not diffused everywhere about him, so that a day's labour would buy him more wisdom than a year could master, but held in private hands, hoarded in precious manuscripts, to be sought for only as gold is sought in narrow fissures and in the beds of brawling streams. Never, since man came into this atmosphere of oxygen and azote, was there anything like the condition of the young American of the nineteenth century. Having in possession or in prospect the best part of half a world, with all its climates and soils to choose from; equipped with wings of fire and smoke that fly with him day and

night so that he counts his journey not in miles, but in degrees, and sees the seasons change as the wild fowl sees them in his annual flights ; with huge leviathans always ready to take him on their broad backs and push behind them with their pectoral or caudal fins the waters that seam the continent or separate the hemispheres ; heir of all old civilisations, founder of that new one which, if all the prophecies of the human heart are not lies, is to be the noblest, as it is the last isolated in space from the races that are governed by dynasties whose divine right grows out of human wrong, yet knit into the most absolute solidarity with mankind of all times and places by the one great thought he inherits as his national birthright ; free to form and express his opinions on almost every subject, and assured that he will soon acquire the last franchise which men withhold from man,—that of stating the laws of his spiritual being and the beliefs he accepts without hindrance except from clearer views of truth,— he seems to want nothing for a large, wholesome, noble, beneficent life. In fact, the chief danger is that he will think the whole planet is made for him, and forget that there are some pos-

sibilities left in the *débris* of the Old-World civilisation which deserve a certain respectful consideration at his hands.

The combing and clipping of this shaggy wild continent are in some measure done for him by those who have gone before. Society has subdivided itself enough to have a place for every form of talent. Thus, if a man show the least sign of ability as a sculptor or a painter, for instance he finds the means of education and a demand for his services. Even a man who knows nothing but science will be provided for, if he does not think it necessary to hang about his birthplace all his days,—which is a most un-American weakness. The apron-strings of an American mother are made of India-rubber. Her boy belongs where he is wanted; and that young Marylander of ours spoke for all our young men when he said that his home was wherever the stars and stripes blew over his head.

And that leads me to say a few words of this young gentleman, who made that audacious movement lately which I chronicled in my last record,—jumping over the seats of I don't know how many boarders to put himself in the place which the Little Gentle-

man's absence had left vacant at the side of Iris. When a young man is found habitually at the side of any one given young lady,—when he lingers where she stays, and hastens when she leaves,—when his eyes follow her as she moves, and rest upon her when she is still,—when he begins to grow a little timid, he who was so bold, and a little pensive, he who was so gay, whenever accident finds them alone,—when he thinks very often of the given young lady, and names her very seldom,——

What do you say about it, my charming young expert in that sweet science in which, perhaps, a long experience is not the first of qualifications?

—But we don't know anything about this young man, except that he is good-looking, and somewhat high-spirited, and strong-limbed, and has a generous style of nature, —all very promising, but by no means proving that he is a proper lover for Iris, whose heart we turned inside out when we opened that sealed book of hers.

Ah, my dear young friend! When your mamma—then, if you will believe it, a very slight young lady, with very pretty hair and figure—came and told *her* mamma that your

papa had—had—asked——No, no, no! she couldn't say it; but her mother—oh, the depth of maternal sagacity!—guessed it all without another word!—When your mother, I say, came and told her mother she was *engaged*, and your grandmother told your grandfather, how much did they know of the intimate nature of the young gentleman to whom she had pledged her existence? I will not be so hard as to ask how much your respected mamma knew at that time of the intimate nature of your respected papa, though, if we should compare a young girl's *man-as-she-thinks-him* with a forty-summered matron's *man-as-she-finds-him*, I have my doubts as to whether the second would be a facsimile of the first in most cases.

The idea that in this world each young person is to wait until he or she finds that precise counterpart who alone of all creation was meant for him or her, and then fall instantly in love with it, is pretty enough, only it is not Nature's way. It is not at all essential that all pairs of human beings should be, as we sometimes say of particular couples, "born for each other." Sometimes a man or a woman is made a great deal better and happier in the end for having had

to conquer the faults of the one beloved, and make the fitness not found at first, by gradual assimilation. There is a class of good women who have no right to marry perfectly good men, because they have the power of saving those who would go to ruin but for the guiding providence of a good wife. I have known many such cases. It is the most momentous question a woman is ever called upon to decide, whether the faults of the man she loves are beyond remedy and will drag her down, or whether she is competent to be his earthly redeemer and lift him to her own level.

A person of *genius* should marry a person of *character*. Genius does not herd with genius. The musk-deer and the civet-cat are never found in company. They don't care for strange scents,—they like plain animals better than perfumed ones. Nay, if you will have the kindness to notice, Nature has not gifted my lady musk-deer with the personal peculiarity by which her lord is so widely known.

Now when genius allies itself with character, the world is very apt to think character has the best of the bargain. A brilliant woman marries a plain, manly fellow, with

a simple intellectual mechanism ;—we have all seen such cases. The world often stares a good deal and wonders. She should have taken that other, with a far more complex mental machinery. She might have had a watch with the philosophical compensation-balance, with the metaphysical index which can split a second into tenths, with the musical chime which can turn every quarter of an hour into melody. She has chosen a plain one, that keeps good time, and that is all.

Let her alone! She knows what she is about. Genius has an infinitely deeper reverence for character than character can have for genius. To be sure, genius gets the world's praise, because its work is a tangible product, to be bought, or had for nothing. It bribes the common voice to praise it by presents of speeches, poems, statues, pictures, or whatever it can please with. Character evolves its best products for home consumption ; but, mind you, it takes a deal more to feed a family for thirty years than to make a holiday feast for our neighbours once or twice in our lives. You talk of the fire of genius. Many a blessed woman, who dies unsung and unremembered, has given out

more of the real vital heat that keeps the life in human souls, without a spark flitting through her humble chimney to tell the world about it, than would set a dozen theories smoking, or a hundred odes simmering, in the brains of so many men of genius. It is in *latent caloric*, if I may borrow a philosophical expression, that many of the noblest hearts give out the life that warms them. Cornelia's lips grow white, and her pulse hardly warms her thin fingers,—but she has melted all the ice out of the hearts of those young Gracchi, and her lost heat is in the blood of her youthful heroes. We are always valuing the soul's temperature by the thermometer of public deed or word. Yet the great sun himself, when he pours his noonday beams upon some vast hyaline boulder, rent from the eternal ice-quarries, and floating toward the tropics, never warms it a fraction above the thirty-two degrees of Fahrenheit that marked the moment when the first drop trickled down its side.

How we all like the spirting up of a fountain, seemingly against the law that makes water everywhere slide, roll, leap, tumble headlong, to get as low as the earth will let it! That is genius. But what is this

transient upward movement, which gives us the glitter and the rainbow, to that unsleeping, all-present force of gravity, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever (if the universe be eternal),—the great outspread hand of God himself, forcing all things down into their places, and keeping them there? Such, in smaller proportion, is the force of character to the fitful movements of genius, as they are or have been linked to each other in many a household, where one name was historic, and the other, let me say the nobler, unknown, save by some faint reflected ray, borrowed from its lustrous companion.

Oftentimes, as I have lain swinging on the water, in the swell of the Chelsea ferry-boats, in that long, sharp-pointed, black cradle in which I love to let the great Mother rock me, I have seen a tall ship glide by against the tide, as if drawn by some invisible tow-line, with a hundred strong arms pulling it. Her sails hung unfilled, her streamers were drooping, she had neither side-wheel nor stern-wheel; still she moved on, stately, in serene triumph, as if with her own life. But I knew that on the other side of the ship, hidden beneath the great hulk that swam so majestically, there was a little

toiling steam-tug with heart of fire and arms of iron, that was hugging it close and dragging it bravely on; and I knew that, if the little steam-tug untwined her arms and left the tall ship, it would wallow and roll about, and drift hither and thither, and go off with the refluent tide, no man knows whither. And so I have known more than one *genius*, high-decked, full-freighted, wide-sailed, gay-pennoned, that, but for the bare toiling arms. and brave, warm, beating heart of the faithful little wife, that nestled close to his shadow, and clung to him, so that no wind or wave could part them, and dragged him on against all the tide of circumstance, would soon have gone down the stream and been heard of no more.—No, I am too much a lover of genius, I sometimes think, and too often get impatient with dull people, so that, in their weak talk, where nothing is taken for granted, I look forward to some future possible state of development, when a gesture passing between a beatified human soul and an archangel shall signify as much as the complete history of a planet, from the time when it curdled to the time when its sun was burnt out. And yet, when a strong brain is weighed with a true heart,

it seems to me like balancing a bubble against a wedge of gold.

—It takes a very *true* man to be a fitting companion for a woman of genius, but not a very great one. I am not sure that she will not embroider her ideal better on a plain ground than on one with a brilliant pattern already worked in its texture. But as the very essence of genius is truthfulness, contact with realities (which are always ideas behind shows of form or language), nothing is so contemptible as falsehood and pretence in its eyes. Now it is not easy to find a perfectly true woman, and it is very hard to find a perfectly true man. And a woman of genius, who has the sagacity to choose such a one as her companion, shows more of the divine gift in so doing than in her finest talk or her most brilliant work of letters or of art.

I have been a good while coming at a secret, for which I wished to prepare you before telling it. I think there is a kindly feeling growing up between Iris and our young Marylander. Not that I suppose there is any distinct understanding between them, but that the affinity which has drawn him from the remote corner where he sat

to the side of the young girl is quietly bringing their two natures together. Just now she is all given up to another; but when he no longer calls upon her daily thoughts and cares, I warn you not to be surprised if this bud of friendship open like the evening primrose, with a sound as of a sudden stolen kiss, and lo! the flower of full-blown love lies unfolded before you.

And now the days had come for our little friend, whose whims and weaknesses had interested us, perhaps, as much as his better traits, to make ready for that long journey which is easier to the cripple than to the strong man, and on which none enters so willingly as he who has borne the life-long load of infirmity during his earthly pilgrimage. At this point, under most circumstances, I would close the doors and draw the veil of privacy before the chamber where the birth which we call death, out of life into the unknown world, is working its mystery. But this friend of ours stood alone in the world, and, as the last act of his life was mainly in harmony with the rest of its drama, I do not here feel the force of the objection commonly lying against that

deathbed literature which forms the staple of a certain portion of the press. Let me explain what I mean, so that my readers may think for themselves a little, before they accuse me of hasty expressions.

The Roman Catholic Church has certain formulæ for its dying children to which almost all of them attach the greatest importance. There is hardly a criminal so abandoned that he is not anxious to receive the "consolations of religion" in his last hours. Even if he be senseless, but still living, I think that the form is gone through with, just as baptism is administered to the unconscious new-born child. Now we do not quarrel with these forms. We look with reverence and affection upon all symbols which give peace and comfort to our fellow-creatures. But the value of the new-born child's passive consent to the ceremony is null, as testimony to the truth of a doctrine. The automatic closing of a dying man's lips on the consecrated wafer proves nothing in favour of the Real Presence, or any other dogma. And, speaking generally, the evidence of dying men in favour of any belief is to be received with great caution.

They commonly tell the truth about their

present feelings, no doubt. A dying man's deposition about anything *he knows*, is good evidence. But it is of much less consequence what a man thinks and says when he is changed by pain, weakness, apprehension, than what he thinks when he is truly and wholly himself. Most murderers die in a very pious frame of mind, expecting to go to glory at once ; yet no man believes he shall meet a larger average of pirates and cut-throats in the streets of the New Jerusalem than of honest folks that died in their beds.

Unfortunately, there has been a very great tendency to make capital of various kinds out of dying men's speeches. The lies that have been put into their mouths for this purpose are endless. The prime minister, whose last breath was spent in scolding his nurse, dies with a magnificent apothegm on his lips,—manufactured by a reporter. Addison gets up a *tableau* and utters an admirable sentiment,—or somebody makes the posthumous dying epigram for him. The incoherent babble of green fields is translated into the language of stately sentiment. One would think, all that dying men had to do was to say the prettiest thing they could,—to make their rhetorical point,

—and then bow themselves politely out of the world.

Worse than this is the torturing of dying people to get their evidence in favour of this or that favourite belief. The camp-followers of proselyting sects have come in at the close of every life where they could get in, to strip the languishing soul of its thoughts, and carry them off as spoils. The Roman Catholic or other priest who insists on the reception of his formula means kindly, we trust, and very commonly succeeds in getting the acquiescence of the subject of his spiritual surgery. But do not let us take the testimony of people who are in the worst condition to form opinions as evidence of the truth or falsehood of that which they accept. A lame man's opinion of dancing is not good for much. A poor fellow who can neither eat nor drink, who is sleepless and full of pains, whose flesh has wasted from him, whose blood is like water, who is gasping for breath, is not in a condition to judge fairly of human life, which in all its main adjustments is intended for men in a normal, healthy condition. It is a remark I have heard from the wise Patriarch of the Medical Profession among us, that the moral con-

dition of patients with disease *above* the great breathing-muscle, the diaphragm, is much more hopeful than that of patients with disease *below* it, in the digestive organs. Many an honest ignorant man has given us pathology when he thought he was giving us psychology. With this preliminary caution I shall proceed to the story of the Little Gentleman's leaving us.

When the divinity-student found that our fellow-boarder was not likely to remain long with us, he, being a young man of tender conscience and kindly nature, was not a little exercised on his behalf. It was undeniable that on several occasions the Little Gentleman had expressed himself with a good deal of freedom on a class of subjects which, according to the divinity-student, he had no right to form an opinion upon. He therefore considered his future welfare in jeopardy.

The Muggletonian sect have a very odd way of dealing with people. If I, the Professor, will only give in to the Muggletonian doctrine, there shall be no question through all that persuasion that I am competent to judge of that doctrine; nay, I shall be quoted as evidence of its truth, while I live,

and cited, after I am dead, as testimony in its behalf; but if I utter any ever so slight Anti-Muggletonian sentiment, then I become *incompetent to form any opinion on the matter*. This, you cannot fail to observe, is exactly the way the pseudo-sciences go to work, as explained in my Lecture on Phrenology. Now I hold that he whose testimony would be accepted in behalf of the Muggletonian doctrine has a right to be heard against it. Whoso offers me any article of belief for my signature implies that I am competent to form my opinion upon it; and if my positive testimony in its favour is of any value, then my negative testimony against it is also of value.

I thought my young friend's attitude was a little too much like that of the Muggletonians. I also remarked a singular timidity on his part lest somebody should "unsettle" somebody's faith,—as if faith did not require exercise as much as any other living thing, and we were not all the better for a shaking up now and then. I don't mean that it would be fair to bother Bridget, the wild Irish girl, or Joice Heth, the centenarian, or any other intellectual non-combatant; but all persons who proclaim a belief which

passes judgment on their neighbours must be ready to have it "unsettled," that is, questioned, at all times and by anybody, —just as those who set up bars across a thoroughfare must expect to have them taken down by every one who wants to pass, if he is strong enough.

Besides, to think of trying to water-proof the American mind against the questions that Heaven rains down upon it shows a misapprehension of our new conditions. If to question everything be unlawful and dangerous, we had better undeclare our independence at once; for what the Declaration means is the right to question everything, even the truth of its own fundamental proposition.

The Old-World order of things is an arrangement of locks and canals, where everything depends on keeping the gates shut, and so holding the upper waters at their level; but the system under which the young republican American is born trusts the whole unimpeded tide of life to the great elemental influences, as the vast rivers of the continent settle their own level in obedience to the laws that govern the planet and the spheres that surround it.

The divinity-student was not quite up to

the idea of the commonwealth, as our young friend the Marylander, for instance, understood it. He could not get rid of that notion of private property in truth, with the right to fence it in, and put up a sign-board, thus :—

☞ ALL TRESPASSERS ARE WARNED OFF THESE GROUNDS !

He took the young Marylander to task for going to the Church of the Galileans, where he had several times accompanied Iris of late.

I am a Churchman,—the young man said, —by education and habit. I love my old Church for many reasons, but most of all because I think it has educated me out of its own forms into the spirit of its highest teachings. I think I belong to the "Broad Church," if any of you can tell what that means.

I had the rashness to attempt to answer the question myself.—Some say the Broad Church means the collective mass of good people of all denominations. Others say that such a definition is nonsense ; that a church is an organisation, and the scattered good folks are no organisation at all. They think that men will eventually come to-

gether on the basis of one or two or more common articles of belief, and form a great unity. Do they see what this amounts to? It means an equal division of intellect! It is mental agrarianism! a thing that never was and never will be, until national and individual idiosyncrasies have ceased to exist. The man of thirty-nine beliefs holds the man of one belief a pauper; he is not going to give up thirty-eight of them for the sake of fraternising with the other in the temple which bears on its front, "*Deo erexit Voltaire.*" A church is a garden, I have heard it said, and the illustration was neatly handled. Yes, and there is no such thing as a *broad* garden. It must be fenced in, and whatever is fenced in is narrow. You cannot have arctic and tropical plants growing together in it, except by the forcing system, which is a mighty narrow piece of business. You can't make a village or a parish or a family think alike, yet you suppose that you can make a world pinch its beliefs or pad them to a single pattern! Why, the very life of an ecclesiastical organisation is a life of *induction*, a state of perpetually disturbed equilibrium kept up by another charged body in the neighbourhood.

If the two bodies touch and share their respective charges, down goes the index of the electrometer!

Do you know that every man has a religious belief peculiar to himself? Smith is always a Smithite. He takes in exactly Smith's-worth of knowledge, Smith's-worth of truth, of beauty, of divinity. And Brown has from time immemorial been trying to burn him, to excommunicate him, to anonymous-article him, because he did not take in Brown's-worth of knowledge, truth, beauty, divinity. He cannot do it, any more than a pint-pot can hold a quart, or a quart-pot be filled by a pint. Iron is essentially the same everywhere and always; but the sulphate of iron is never the same as the carbonate of iron. Truth is invariable; but the *Smithate* of truth must always differ from the *Brownate* of truth.

The wider the intellect, the larger and simpler the expressions in which its knowledge is embodied. The inferior race, the degraded and enslaved people, the small-minded individual, live in the details which to larger minds and more advanced tribes of men reduce themselves to axioms and laws. As races and individual minds must always

differ just as sulphates and carbonates do, I cannot see ground for expecting the Broad Church to be founded on any fusion of *intellectual* beliefs, which of course implies that those who hold the larger number of doctrines as essential shall come down to those who hold the smaller number. These doctrines are to the *negative* aristocracy what the quarterings of their coats are to the *positive* orders of nobility.

The Broad Church, I think, will never be based on anything that requires the use of *language*. Freemasonry gives an idea of such a church, and a brother is known and cared for in a strange land where no word of his can be understood. The apostle of this church may be a deaf mute carrying a cup of cold water to a thirsting fellow-creature. The cup of cold water does not require to be translated for a foreigner to understand it. I am afraid the only Broad Church possible is one that has its creed in the heart, and not in the head,—that we shall know its members by their fruits, and not by their words. If you say this communion of well-doers is no church, I can only answer, that all *organised* bodies have their limits of size, and that when we find a man a hundred feet

high and thirty feet broad across the shoulders, we will look out for an organisation that shall include all Christendom.

Some of us do practically recognise a Broad Church and a Narrow Church, however. The Narrow Church may be seen in the ship's boats of humanity, in the long-boat, in the jolly-boat, in the captain's gig, lying off the poor old vessel, thanking God that *they* are safe, and reckoning how soon the hulk containing the mass of their fellow-creatures will go down. The Broad Church is on board, working hard at the pumps, and very slow to believe that the ship will be swallowed up with so many poor people in it, fastened down under the hatches ever since it floated.

—All this, of course, was nothing but my poor notion about these matters. I am simply an "outsider," you know; only it doesn't do very well for a nest of Hingham boxes to talk too much about outsiders and insiders!

After this talk of ours, I think these two young people went pretty regularly to the Church of the Galileans. Still they could not keep away from the sweet harmonies and rhythmic litanies of Saint Polycarp on

the great Church festival-days; so that, between the two, they were so much together, that the boarders began to make remarks, and our landlady said to me, one day, that, though it was noon of her business, them that had eyes couldn't help seein' that there was somethin' goin' on between them two young people; she thought the young man was a very likely young man, though jest what his prospecs was was unbeknown to her; but she thought he must be doin' well, and rather guessed he would be able to take care of a femily, if he didn't go to takin' a house; for a gentleman and his wife could board a great deal cheaper than they could keep house;—but then that girl was nothin' but a child, and wouldn't think of bein' married this five year. They was good boarders, both of 'em, paid regular, and was as pooty a couple as she ever laid eyes on.

—To come back to what I began to speak of before,—the divinity-student was exercised in his mind about the Little Gentleman, and, in the kindness of his heart,—for he was a good young man,—and in the strength of his convictions,—for he took it for granted that he and his crowd were right, and other folks and their crowd were

wrong,—he determined to bring the Little Gentleman round to his faith before he died, if he could. So he sent word to the sick man that he should be pleased to visit him and have some conversation with him; and received for answer that he would be welcome.

The divinity-student made him a visit, therefore, and had a somewhat remarkable interview with him, which I shall briefly relate, without attempting to justify the positions taken by the Little Gentleman. He found him weak, but calm. Iris sat silent by his pillow.

After the usual preliminaries, the divinity-student said, in a kind way, that he was sorry to find him in failing health, that he felt concerned for his soul, and was anxious to assist him in making preparations for the great change awaiting him.

I thank you, Sir,—said the Little Gentleman;—permit me to ask you, what makes you think I am not ready for it, Sir, and that you can do anything to help me, Sir?

I address you only as a fellow-man,—said the divinity-student,—and therefore a fellow-sinner.

I am *not* a man, Sir!—said the Little

Gentleman.—I was born into this world the wreck of a man, and I shall not be judged with a race to which I do not belong. Look at this!—he said, and held up his withered arm.—See there!—and he pointed to his misshapen extremities.—Lay your hand here! —and he laid his own on the region of his misplaced heart.—I have known nothing of the life of your race. When I first came to my consciousness, I found myself an object of pity, or a sight to show. The first strange child I ever remember hid its face and would not come near me. I was a broken-hearted as well as broken-bodied boy. I grew into the emotions of ripening youth, and all that I could have loved shrank from my presence. I became a man in years, and had nothing in common with manhood but its longings. My life is the dying pang of a worn-out race, and I shall go down alone into the dust, out of this world of men and women, without ever knowing the fellowship of the one or the love of the other. I will not die with a lie rattling in my throat. If another state of being has anything worse in store for me, I have had a long apprenticeship to give me strength that I may bear it. I don't believe it, Sir! I have too much faith for that.

God has not left me wholly without comfort, even here. I love this old place where I was born;—the heart of the world beats under the three hills of Boston, Sir! I love this great land, with so many tall men in it, and so many good, noble women.—His eyes turned to the silent figure by his pillow,—I have learned to accept meekly what has been allotted to me, but I cannot honestly say that I think my sin has been greater than my suffering. I bear the ignorance and the evildoing of whole generations in my single person. I never drew a breath of air nor took a step that was not a punishment for another's fault. I may have had many wrong thoughts, but I cannot have done many wrong deeds,—for my cage has been a narrow one, and I have paced it alone. I have looked through the bars and seen the great world of men busy and happy, but I had no part in their doings. I have known what it was to dream of the great passions; but since my mother kissed me before she died, no woman's lips have pressed my cheek,—nor ever will.

—The young girl's eyes glittered with a sudden film, and almost without a thought, but with a warm human instinct that rushed

up into her face with her heart's blood, she bent over and kissed him. It was the sacrament that washed out the memory of long years of bitterness, and I should hold it an unworthy thought to defend her.

The Little Gentleman repaid her with the only tear any of us ever saw him shed.

The divinity-student rose from his place, and, turning away from the sick man, walked to the other side of the room, where he bowed his head and was still. All the questions he had meant to ask had faded from his memory. The tests he had prepared by which to judge of his fellow-creature's fitness for heaven seemed to have lost their virtue. He could trust the crippled child of sorrow to the Infinite Parent. The kiss of the fair-haired girl had been like a sign from heaven, that angels watched over him whom he was presuming but a moment before to summon before the tribunal of his private judgment.

Shall I pray with you?—he said, after a pause.—A little before he would have said, Shall I pray *for* you?—The Christian religion, as taught by its Founder, is full of *sentiment.* So we must not blame the divinity-student, if he was overcome by those yearnings of human sympathy which pre-

dominate so much more in the sermons of the Master than in the writings of his successors, and which have made the parable of the Prodigal Son the consolation of mankind, as it has been the stumbling-block of all exclusive doctrines.

Pray !—said the Little Gentleman.

The divinity-student prayed, in low, tender tones, that God would look on his servant lying helpless at the feet of his mercy ; that he would remember his long years of bondage in the flesh ; that he would deal gently with the bruised reed. Thou hast visited the sins of the fathers upon this their child. Oh, turn away from him the penalties of his own transgressions ! Thou hast laid upon him, from infancy, the cross which thy stronger children are called upon to take up ; and now that he is fainting under it, be thou his stay, and do thou succour him that is tempted ! Let his manifold infirmities come between him and thy judgment ; in wrath remember mercy ! If his eyes are not opened to all thy truth, let thy compassion lighten the darkness that rests upon him, even as it came through the word of thy Son to blind Bartimeus, who sat by the wayside, begging !

Many more petitions he uttered, but all in the same subdued tone of tenderness. In the presence of helpless suffering, and in the fast-darkening shadow of the Destroyer, he forgot all but his Christian humanity, and cared more about consoling his fellow-man than making a proselyte of him.

This was the last prayer to which the Little Gentleman ever listened. Some change was rapidly coming over him during this last hour of which I have been speaking. The excitement of pleading his cause before his self-elected spiritual adviser,—the emotion which overcame him when the young girl obeyed the sudden impulse of her feelings and pressed her lips to his cheek,—the thoughts that mastered him while the divinity-student poured out his soul for him in prayer, might well hurry on the inevitable moment. When the divinity-student had uttered his last petition, commending him to the Father through his Son's intercession, he turned to look on him before leaving his chamber. His face was changed.—There is a language of the human countenance which we all understand without an interpreter, though the lineaments belong to the rudest savage that ever stammered in an unknown

barbaric dialect. By the stillness of the sharpened features, by the blankness of the tearless eyes, by the fixedness of the smileless mouth, by the deadening tints, by the contracted brow, by the dilating nostril, we know that the soul is soon to leave its mortal tenement, and is already closing up its windows and putting out its fires.—Such was the aspect of the face upon which the divinity-student looked, after the brief silence which followed his prayer. The change had been rapid, though not that abrupt one which is liable to happen at any moment in these cases.—The sick man looked towards him.—Farewell,—he said,—I thank you. Leave me alone with her.

When the divinity-student had gone, and the Little Gentleman found himself alone with Iris, he lifted his hand to his neck, and took from it, suspended by a slender chain, a quaint, antique-looking key,—the same key I had once seen him holding. He gave this to her and pointed to a carved cabinet opposite his bed, one of those that had so attracted my curious eyes and set me wondering as to what it might contain.

Open it,—he said,—and light the lamp.—The young girl walked to the cabinet and

unlocked the door. A deep recess appeared, lined with black velvet, against which stood in white relief an ivory crucifix. A silver lamp hung over it. She lighted the lamp and came back to the bedside. The dying man fixed his eyes upon the figure of the dying Saviour.—Give me your hand,—he said; and Iris placed her right hand in his left. So they remained, until presently his eyes lost their meaning, though they still remained vacantly fixed upon the white image. Yet he held the young girl's hand firmly, as if it were leading him through some deep-shadowed valley and it was all he could cling to. But presently an involuntary muscular contraction stole over him, and his terrible dying grasp held the poor girl as if she were wedged in an engine of torture. She pressed her lips together and sat still. The inexorable hand held her tighter and tighter, until she felt as if her own slender fingers would be crushed in its gripe. It was one of the tortures of the Inquisition she was suffering, and she could not stir from her place. Then, in her great anguish, she too cast her eyes upon that dying figure, and, looking upon its pierced hands and feet and side and lacerated forehead, she felt that she also

must suffer uncomplaining. In the moment of her sharpest pain she did not forget the duties of her tender office, but dried the dying man's moist forehead with her handkerchief, even while the dews of agony were glistening on her own. How long this lasted she never could tell. *Time* and *thirst* are two things you and I talk about; but the victims whom holy men and righteous judges used to stretch on their engines knew better what they meant than you or I!—What is that great bucket of water for? said the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, before she was placed on the rack.—*For you to drink,*—said the torturer to the little woman.—She could not think that it would take such a flood to quench the fire in her, and so keep her alive for her confession. The torturer knew better than she.

After a time not to be counted in minutes, as the clock measures,—without any warning,—there came a swift change of his features; his face turned white, as the waters whiten when a sudden breath passes over their still surface; the muscles instantly relaxed, and Iris, released at once from her care for the sufferer and from his unconscious grasp, fell senseless, with a

feeble cry,—the only utterance of her long agony.

Perhaps you sometimes wander in through the iron gates of the Copp's-Hill burial-ground. You love to stroll round among the graves that crowd each other in the thickly-peopled soil of that breezy summit. You love to lean on the freestone slab which lies over the bones of the Mathers,—to read the epitaph of stout William Clark, "Despiser of Sorry Persons and little Actions,"—to stand by the stone grave of sturdy Daniel Malcolm, and look upon the splintered slab that tells the old rebel's story,—to kneel by the triple stone that says how the three Worthylakes, father, mother, and young daughter, died on the same day and lie buried there; a mystery; the subject of a moving ballad, by the late BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,—as may be seen in his autobiography, which will explain the secret of the triple gravestone; though the old philosopher has made a mistake, unless the stone is wrong.

Not very far from that you will find a fair mound, of dimensions fit to hold a well-grown man. I will not tell you the inscrip-

tion upon the stone which stands at its head; for I do not wish you to be *sure* of the resting-place of one who could not bear to think that he should be known as a cripple among the dead, after being pointed at so long among the living. There is one sign, it is true, by which, if you have been a sagacious reader of these papers, you will at once know it; but I fear you read carelessly, and must study them more diligently before you will detect the hint to which I allude.

The Little Gentleman lies where he longed to lie, among the old names and the old bones of the old Boston people. At the foot of his resting-place is the river, alive with the wings and antennæ of its colossal water-insects; over opposite are the great war-ships, and the heavy guns, which, when they roar, shake the soil in which he lies; and in the steeple of Christ Church, hard by, are the sweet chimes which are the Boston boy's *Ranz des Vaches*, whose echoes follow him all the world over.

In Pace!

I told you a good while ago that the Little Gentleman could not do a better thing than

to leave all his money, whatever it might be, to the young girl who has since that established such a claim upon him. He did not, however. A considerable bequest to one of our public institutions keeps his name in grateful remembrance. The telescope through which he was fond of watching the heavenly bodies, and the movements of which had been the source of such odd fancies on my part, is now the property of a Western College. You smile as you think of my taking it for a fleshless human figure, when I saw its tube pointing to the sky, and thought it was an arm, under the white drapery thrown over it for protection. So do I smile *now;* I belong to the numerous class who are prophets after the fact, and hold my nightmares very cheap by daylight.

I have received many letters of inquiry as to the sound *resembling a woman's voice,* which occasioned me so many perplexities. Some thought there was no question that he had a second apartment, in which he had made an asylum for a deranged female relative. Others were of opinion that he was, as I once suggested, a "Bluebeard" with patriarchal tendencies, and I have even been censured for introducing so Oriental

an element into my record of boarding-house experience.

Come in, and see me, the Professor, some evening when I have nothing else to do, and ask me to play you *Tartini's Devil's Sonata* on that extraordinary instrument in my possession, well known to amateurs as one of the masterpieces of *Joseph Guarnerius*. The *vox humana* of the great Haerlem organ is very lifelike, and the same stop in the organ of the Cambridge chapel might be mistaken in some of its tones for a human voice; but I think you never heard anything come so near the cry of a *prima donna* as the A string and the E string of this instrument. A single fact will illustrate the resemblance. I was executing some *tours de force* upon it one evening, when the policeman of our district rang the bell sharply, and asked what was the matter in the house. He had heard a woman's screams,—he was sure of it. I had to make the instrument *sing* before his eyes before he could be satisfied that he had not heard the cries of a woman. This instrument was bequeathed to me by the Little Gentleman. Whether it had any thing to do with the sounds I heard coming from his chamber, you can form your own

opinion ;—I have no other conjecture to offer. It is *not true* that a second apartment with a secret entrance was found ; and the story of the veiled lady is the invention of one of the Reporters.

Bridget, the housemaid, always insisted that he died a Catholic. She had seen the crucifix, and believed that he prayed on his knees before it. The last circumstance is very probably true ; indeed, there was a spot worn on the carpet just before this cabinet which might be thus accounted for. Why he, whose whole life was a crucifixion, should not love to look on that divine image of blameless suffering, I cannot see ; on the contrary, it seems to me the most natural thing in the world that he should. But there are those who want to make private property of everything, and can't make up their minds that people who don't think as they do should claim any interest in that infinite compassion expressed in the central figure of the Christendom which includes us all.

The divinity-student expressed a hope before the boarders that he should meet him in heaven.—The question is, whether he 'll meet *you*,—said the young fellow

John, rather smartly. The divinity-student hadn't thought of *that*.

However, he is a worthy young man, and I trust I have shown him in a kindly and respectful light. He will get a parish by-and-by; and, as he is about to marry the sister of an old friend,—the Schoolmistress, whom some of us remember,—and as all sorts of expensive accidents happen to young married ministers, he will be under bonds to the amount of his salary, which means starvation, if they are forfeited, to think all his days as he thought when he was settled, —unless the majority of his people change with him or in advance of him. A hard case, to which nothing could reconcile a man, except that the faithful discharge of daily duties in his personal relations with his parishioners will make him useful enough in his way, though as a thinker he may cease to exist before he has reached middle age.

—Iris went into mourning for the Little Gentleman. Although, as I have said, he left the bulk of his property, by will, to a public institution, he added a codicil, by which he disposed of various pieces of property as tokens of kind remembrance. It was in this way I became the possessor of

the wonderful instrument I have spoken of, which had been purchased for him out of an Italian convent. The landlady was comforted with a small legacy. The following extract relates to Iris: "—in consideration of her manifold acts of kindness, but only in token of grateful remembrance, and by no means as a reward for services which cannot be compensated, a certain messuage, with all the land thereto appertaining, situate in —— Street, at the North End, so called, of Boston, aforesaid, the same being the house in which I was born, but now inhabited by several families, and known as 'the Rookery.'" Iris had also the crucifix, the portrait, and the red-jewelled ring. The funeral or death's-head ring was buried with him.

It was a good while after the Little Gentleman was gone before our boarding-house recovered its wonted cheerfulness. There was a flavour in his whims and local prejudices that we liked, even while we smiled at them. It was hard to see the tall chair thrust away among useless lumber, to dismantle his room, to take down the picture of Leah, the handsome Witch of Essex, to move away the massive shelves that held

the books he loved, to pack up the tube through which he used to study the silent stars, looking down at him like the eyes of dumb creatures, with a kind of stupid half-consciousness that did not worry him as did the eyes of men and women,—and hardest of all, to displace that sacred figure to which his heart had always turned and found refuge, in the feelings it inspired, from all the perplexities of his busy brain. It was hard, but it had to be done.

And by-and-by we grow cheerful again, and the breakfast-table wore something of its old look. The Koh-i-noor, as we named the gentleman with the *diamond*, left us, however, soon after that "little mill," as the young fellow John called it, where he came off second best. His departure was no doubt hastened by a note from the landlady's daughter, enclosing a lock of purple hair which she "had valued as a pledge of affection, ere she knew the hollowness of the vows he had breathed," speedily followed by another, enclosing the landlady's bill. The next morning he was missing, as were his limited wardrobe and the trunk that held it. Three empty bottles of Mrs. Allen's celebrated preparation, each of them asserting,

on its word of honour as a bottle, that its former contents were "not a dye," were all that was left to us of the Koh-i-noor.

From this time forward the landlady's daughter manifested a decided improvement in her style of carrying herself before the boarders. She abolished the odious little flat, gummy side-curl. She left off various articles of "jewelry." She began to help her mother in some of her household duties. She became a regular attendant on the ministrations of a very worthy clergyman, having been attracted to his meetin' by witnessing a marriage ceremony in which he called a man and a woman a "gentleman" and a "lady,"—a stroke of gentility which quite overcame her. She even took a part in what she called a *Sahbath* school, though it was held on Sunday, and by no means on Saturday, as the name she intended to utter implied. All this, which was very sincere, as I believe, on her part, and attended with a great improvement in her character, ended in her bringing home a young man, with straight, sandy hair, brushed so as to stand up steeply above his forehead, wearing a pair of green spectacles, and dressed in black broadcloth. His personal aspect, and

a certain solemnity of countenance, led me to think he must be a clergyman; and as Master Benjamin Franklin blurted out before several of us boarders, one day, that "Sis had got a beau," I was pleased at the prospect of her becoming a minister's wife. On inquiry, however, I found that the somewhat solemn look which I had noticed was indeed a professional one, but not clerical. He was a young undertaker, who had just succeeded to a thriving business. Things, I believe, are going on well at this time of writing, and I am glad for the landlady's daughter and her mother. Sextons and undertakers are the cheerfullest people in the world at home, as comedians and circus-clowns are the most melancholy in their domestic circle.

As our old boarding-house is still in existence, I do not feel at liberty to give too minute a statement of the present condition of each and all of its inmates. I am happy to say, however, that they are all alive and well, up to this time. That kind old gentleman who sat opposite to me is growing older, as old men will, but still smiles benignantly on all the boarders, and has come to be a kind of father to all of them,—so that on his birthday there is always something like a

family festival. The Poor Relation, even, has warmed into a filial feeling towards him, and on his last birthday made him a beautiful present, namely, a very handsomely bound copy of Blair's celebrated poem, *The Grave*.

The young man John is still, as he says, "in fust-rate fettle." I saw him spar, not long since, at a private exhibition, and do himself great credit in a set-to with Henry Finnegass, Esq., a professional gentleman of celebrity. I am pleased to say that he has been promoted to an upper clerkship, and, in consequence of his rise in office, has taken an apartment somewhat lower down than number "forty-'leven," as he facetiously called his attic. Whether there is any truth, or not, in the story of his attachment to, and favourable reception by, the daughter of the head of an extensive wholesale grocer's establishment, I will not venture an opinion; I may say, however, that I have met him repeatedly in company with a very well-nourished and high-coloured young lady, who, I understand, is the daughter of the house in question.

Some of the boarders were of opinion that Iris did not return the undisguised attentions of the handsome young Marylander.

Instead of fixing her eyes steadily on him, as she used to look upon the Little Gentleman, she would turn them away, as if to avoid his own. They often went to church together, it is true; but nobody, of course, supposes there is any relation between religious sympathy and those wretched "sentimental" movements of the human heart upon which it is commonly agreed that nothing better is based than society, civilisation, friendship, the relation of husband and wife, and of parent and child, and which many people must think were singularly overrated by the Teacher of Nazareth, whose whole life, as I said before, was full of sentiment, loving this or that young man, pardoning this or that sinner, weeping over the dead, mourning for the doomed city, blessing, and perhaps kissing, the little children, —so that the Gospels are still cried over almost as often as the last work of fiction!

But one fine June morning there rumbled up to the door of our boarding-house a hack containing a lady inside and a trunk on the outside. It was our friend the lady-patroness of Miss Iris, the same who had been called by her admiring pastor "The Model of all the Virtues." Once a week she

had written a letter, in a rather formal hand, but full of good advice, to her young charge. And now she had come to carry her away, thinking that she had learned all she was likely to learn under her present course of teaching. The Model, however, was to stay a while—a week, or more — before they should leave together.

Iris was obedient, as she was bound to be. She was respectful, grateful, as a child is with a just, but not tender, parent. Yet something was wrong. She had one of her trances, and became statue-like, as before, only the day after the Model's arrival. She was wan and silent, tasted nothing at table, smiled as if by a forced effort, and often looked vaguely away from those who were looking at her, her eyes just glazed with the shining moisture of a tear that must not be allowed to gather and fall. Was it grief at parting from the place where her strange friendship had grown up with the Little Gentleman ? Yet she seemed to have become reconciled to his loss, and rather to have a deep feeling of gratitude that she had been permitted to care for him in his last weary days.

The Sunday after the Model's arrival,

that lady had an attack of headache, and was obliged to shut herself up in a darkened room alone. Our two young friends took the opportunity to go together to the Church of the Galileans. They said but little going, —"collecting their thoughts" for the service, I devoutly hope. My kind good friend the pastor preached that day one of his sermons that make us all feel like brothers and sisters, and his text was that affectionate one from John, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." When Iris and her friend came out of the church, they were both pale, and walked a space without speaking.

At last the young man said,—You and I are not little children, Iris!

She looked in his face an instant, as if startled, for there was something strange in the tone of his voice. She smiled faintly, but spoke never a word.

In deed and in truth, Iris,——

What shall a poor girl say or do, when a strong man falters in his speech before her, and can do nothing better than hold out his hand to finish his broken sentence?

The poor girl said nothing, but quietly laid her ungloved hand in his,—the little

soft white hand which had ministered so tenderly and suffered so patiently.

The blood came back to the young man's cheeks, as he lifted to his lips, even as they walked there in the street, touched it gently with them, and said,—"It is mine!"

Iris did not contradict him.

The seasons pass by so rapidly, that I am startled to think how much has happened since these events I was describing. Those two young people would insist on having their own way about their own affairs, notwithstanding the good lady, so justly called the Model, insisted that the age of twenty-five years was as early as any discreet young lady should think of incurring the responsibilities, etc., etc. Long before Iris had reached that age, she was the wife of a young Maryland engineer, directing some of the vast constructions of his native State, —where he was growing rich fast enough to be able to decline that famous Russian offer which would have made him a kind of nabob in a few years. Iris does not write verse often, nowadays, but she sometimes draws.

The last sketch of hers I have seen in my Southern visits was of two children, a boy and girl, the youngest holding a silver goblet, like the one she held that evening when I— I was so struck with her statue-like beauty. If in the later summer months you find the grass marked with footsteps around that grave on Copp's-Hill I told you of, and flowers scattered over it, you may be sure that Iris is here on her annual visit to the home of her childhood and that excellent lady whose only fault was, that Nature had written out her list of virtues on ruled paper, and forgotten to rub out the lines.

One thing more I must mention. Being on the Common, last Sunday, I was attracted by the cheerful spectacle of a well-dressed and somewhat youthful papa wheeling a very elegant little carriage containing a stout baby. A buxom young lady watched them from one of the stone seats, with an interest which could be nothing less than maternal. I at once recognised my old friend, the young fellow whom we called John. He was delighted to see me, introduced me to "Madam," and would have the lusty infant out of the carriage, and hold him up for me to look at.

Now, then,—he said to the two-year-old, —show the gentleman how you hit from the shoulder.—Whereupon the little imp pushed his fat fist straight into my eye, to his father's intense satisfaction.

Fust-rate little chap,—said the papa.—Chip of the old block. Regl'r little Johnny, you know.

I was so much pleased to find the young fellow settled in life, and pushing about one of "them little articles" he had seemed to want so much, that I took my "punishment" at the hands of the infant pugilist with great equanimity.—And how is the old boarding-house?—I asked.

A 1,—he answered.—Painted and papered as good as new. Gahs in all the rooms up to the sky-parlours. Old woman's layin' up money, they say. Means to send Ben Franklin to college.—Just then the first bell rang for church, and my friend, who, I understand, has become a most exemplary member of society, said he must be off to get ready for meetin', and told the young one to "shake dada," which he did with his closed fist, in a somewhat menacing manner. And so the young man John, as we used to call him, took the pole of the miniature car-

riage, and pushed the small pugilist before him homewards, followed, in a somewhat leisurely way, by his pleasant-looking lady-companion, and I sent a sigh and a smile after him.

That evening, as soon as it was dark, I could not help going round by the old boarding-house. The "gahs" was lighted, but the curtains, or, more properly, the painted shades, were not down. And so I stood there and looked in along the table where the boarders sat at the evening meal,—our old breakfast-table, which some of us feel as if we knew so well. There were new faces at it, but also old and familiar ones.—The landlady, in a wonderfully smart cap, looking young, comparatively speaking, and as if half the wrinkles had been ironed out of her forehead.—Her daughter, in rather dressy half-mourning, with a vast brooch of jet, got up, apparently, to match the gentleman next her, who was in black costume and sandy hair,—the last rising straight from his forehead, like the marble flame one sometimes sees at the top of a funeral urn. —The Poor Relation, not in absolute black, but in a stuff with specks of white; as much as to say, that, if there were any more

Hirams left to sigh for her, there were pinholes in the night of her despair, through which a ray of hope might find its way to an adorer.—Master Benjamin Franklin, grown taller of late, was in the act of splitting his face open with a wedge of pie, so that his features were seen to disadvantage for the moment.—The good old gentleman was sitting still and thoughtful. All at once he turned his face toward the window where I stood, and, just as if he had seen me, smiled his benignant smile. It was a recollection of some past pleasant moment; but it fell upon me like the blessing of a father.

I kissed my hand to them all, unseen as I stood in the outer darkness; and as I turned and went my way, the table and all around it faded into the realm of twilight shadows and of midnight dreams.

And so my year's record is finished. The Professor has talked less than his predecessor, but he has heard and seen more. Thanks to all those friends who from time

to time have sent their messages of kindly recognition and fellow-feeling! Peace to all such as may have been vexed in spirit by any utterance these pages have repeated! They will, doubtless, forget for the moment the difference in the hues of truth we look at through our human prisms, and join in singing (inwardly) this hymn to the Source of the light we all need to lead us, and the warmth which alone can make us all brothers.

A SUN-DAY HYMN.

Lord of all being! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star,
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

Sun of our life, thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day;
Star of our hope, thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn;
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine!

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame.

INDEX.

THE END.

Edinburgh University Press:
T. AND A. CONSTABLE, PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY.