Superstitions and Mental Disorders

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Notice

A Mystery of the Sea

Here is a story published in 1829, at the crossroads of the fictions to come of Poe and Melville, in which the mixing of scientific realism, imagination and superstition is emblematic of the birth of the Fantastic genre in nineteenth-century American literature. The supernatural narrative itself is embedded between a long introduction, in which the narrator exposes purported enlightened scholarly views on superstitions, and a short conclusion attesting the indisputable honesty of the original reporter of these extraordinary facts.

The substantial prolegomena introduces ordinary superstitions, widespread among "common sailors" (216), induced by their everyday observation of "the book of nature, striving to read, in its various leaves, the sky, the stars, the clouds, and waters, the dim, but legible traces of [their] destiny" (217). The narrator then adds tongue-in-cheek that these beliefs "would never be dreamed of on land, but by some bed-ridden beldame of eighty" (216), while he reasserts his faith in the human rational mind and in "the light which has been shed upon it by education" (216). He completes his rationale on the supernatural by declaring, in a way which modern logic would not discard so easily, that "the creations of the fancy depend mainly on the temperament of the man, and the structure and cultivation of his mind" (217), making the superstitious persons what psychiatry would fifty years later call neurotics: "To the man of well balanced mind solitude has no terrors . . . But who are they that tremble at their shadow when alone ? . . . Who, but the weak in mind ? Who but those whose estrangement from society has nearly obliterated the faint traces of an imperfect education ?" (217). In a statement which Freud would not deny,[273] the narrator reminds us that "[o]nce, poetry and superstition were nearly synonymous, and exerted a united influence upon the minds of men" (216), before he concludes that although "thanks be to Heaven, the mind at length is free" (216), su-

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[273] See Freud's essays "The Uncanny" (1919) about opposite meanings in words, and *Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's "Gradiva"* (1907) as far as poets and the unconscious are concerned.

perstitions are still lurking around in uncivilized regions of the earth such as "the desert of the ocean" (197).

In a second step, the narrator endeavors to convince his readers that he is not one of those credulous persons whose weak minds can be easily deceived, boasting that for him "the churchyard has no terrors" (218) and that he had often "walked it merely for meditation ; and the idea of encountering the spirits of the dead who slumber there, never crossed [his] mind" (218). In fact, although he confesses that he believes in the supernatural, the narrator asserts that he is not scared of revenants for "[the] dead have nothing to ask at [his] hands" (218). But even if "[a]ll tales of the kind are directly in the teeth of reason" (218), some stories are "so well attested, that despite of all [his] philosophy, [he] dare not gainsay them" (218). His presumed tolerance, ahead of an absolute scientist mental attitude inherited from the Enlightenment of the 18th century, makes him all the more reliable and gives credit to the narrative he relates. The "real effect" induced by this literary trick is reinforced by the unquestionable honesty of the second narrator, Captain Sharp, who is "neither an ignorant nor a weak-minded man" (219) and who "merely tell[s] [his] story, and leave[s] [readers] and every one who may hear it hereafter, to put upon it what interpretation they please" (220). He is thus identified as a reliable witness according to the preliminary criteria given by the narrator, and even after other living persons' testimonies for "the patronage of the most eminent merchants in Rhode Island, in early life, and the unqualified esteem of a large circle of friends *now*, are sufficient testimonials in favor of his probity" (219). Captain Sharp, like the narrator, seems to be cast in the same mould as Melville's Starbuck: "Uncommonly conscientious for a seaman, and endued with a deep natural reverence, the wild watery loneliness of his life did therefore strongly incline him to superstition; but to that sort of superstition, which in some organization seems rather to spring, somehow, from intelligence than from ignorance."[274]

The supernatural story itself is relatively short and simple. Michael Dodd, a sailor whose ways are so strange that they perturb gravely Captain Sharp's crew, disappears mysteriously right in the middle of the Atlantic. From the outset, Dodd's personality is perceived as disquieting, as "[t]here was not a man on board the Char-

[274] Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (1851).

lotte, who could say that he ever caught Michael Dodd's eye long enough to tell its colour" (220), and above all, while he does not utter a word in daytime, at night when "he lies in his birth, [he] mutters and groans like a man in a fit of the nightmare" (221) as if "he ha[d] a mind to hold conversation with the devil" (222), evoking, although he is not under the influence of hypnotism, the frightening behavior of one of Poe's doomed "sleepwakers."[275]

The mystery deepens when Dodd confides to the Captain he has the appalling premonition that he is going to be physically seized at midnight by unidentifiable evil powers. However, the narrator, who is not afraid of ghosts, is then literally taken aback by the nature of the facts: although Dodds looks like a living dead with his eyes "like pale fires from the tomb" (223), "his hands crossed before him, and his head dropped upon his breast, like a condemned criminal" (224), he does not come back to haunt the living, and, on the contrary, he is abruptly and inexplicably withdrawn from the face of the earth. Dodd embodies the *opposite* of an apparition or a revenant for, beyond the mystery of his presence, what is so disquieting about himself is precisely his disappearance. In that mystery at sea, the traditional schema of the ghost story is inverted: the spirit disappears, and light, far from being divine, represents something devilish, "not of earth nor heaven" (224). Unquestionably ahead of its time, this short-story, by many aspects, foreshadows much more modern literary trends, including the late twentieth century theme of abduction so popular in Science-Fiction.

The Hermit of Agualta

Although America and Britain had passed laws to disrupt slave trade in the first decade of the nineteenth century,[276] American commercial involvement with the West Indies was still intense in 1831, and a large part of the economic prosperity of New

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275 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Masque of the Red Death" (1842); "Mesmeric Revelation" (1844); "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845).

276 The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed by British Parliament in 1807; the American Congress banned all imports of slaves in 1808.

England ports was derived from what remained of the "triangular trade."[277] The privileged links between New England and the British West Indies led to a growing interest in the tropics and their particular lifestyle and natural as well as anthropological characteristics. This text, particularly well documented, shows that the curiosity of American travellers brought them to sail to the south seas and visit their islands. The abundance of accurate details on the flora and the fauna as well as on the geography of Jamaica is convincing evidence that it was the case of the author. His romantic-styled description of the vale of Agualta reveals his "propensity to paint nature" (199) in terms which sometimes evoke pages of William Bartram's *Travels.*[278] Moreover, his solitary perambulations, "[c]ontrary to the custom of the country, and to the great scandal of [his] friends" (227), in the tropical forests make him a precursor of Thoreau, at least as far as his attitude toward his fellow-men is concerned, as he confesses bluntly: "If to prefer communion with nature to the companionship of men be misanthropy, then, I fear, I must be entered with that ill-favored class of bipeds" (226).

The depiction of the place is tinged with mysticism and reveals the kind of respect usually inspired by sacred monuments or buildings: "All around it the land rises to the height of one thousand feet, and is clothed with gigantic trees, using, like the walls of an amphitheatre, column upon column, with their green capitals, and hung by the whole family of vines with festoons and streamers" (229). Not only is the landscape grandiose but the luxuriance of nature, combined with the sweetness of the climate, excites the narrator's sensuousness while "[t]he most delicious sensation stole over [him]. The Arcadian[279] shades of classic Greece rose upon [his] memory" (230).

The valley of Agualta itself is a secluded place, "in some unknown way locked from the knowledge of men" (229), whose very name evokes water (the name comes from the Spanish *agua alta*: high water), which makes it an island within the island. It is not ex-

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[277] A trading pattern implying the American colonies, the West Indies, the western coast of Africa, and Great Britain, based on the exchange of staples, sugar, manufactured goods and slaves. All the various combinations of this pattern went through the West Indies.

[278] William Bartram (1739-1823), *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Choctaws* (1792).

[279] A region of ancient Greece, surrounded by mountains, in which people lived a proverbially simple and pastoral life.

actly desert though, since the narrator unexpectedly meets Velasques, the master of the place whose appearance calls to mind Defoe's famous castaway:[280] "A large palm leaf hat covered his head, from which long gray locks fell to his shoulder and breast, and mingled there with a most majestic beard" (230). Like his fictional predecessor on his island, the hermit of Agualta "found [him]self upon the beach a shipwrecked and pennyless man" (235) and he lived his almost solitary life in the middle of clearings converted into gardens.

No Friday accompanies the once well-to-do hidalgo in his solitary life but his faithful servant Sancho who, not unlike his homonym in Cervantes *Don Quixote* (1605-1615), "has ate [his] bread in prosperity, and will not leave his old master now that the cloud is on him" (232), waiting for the reward of his patience which he will obtain after his master's death. However, what seduces the narrator is not so much Velasques's uncommon personality but the unanticipated presence in such a desolate place of his daughter, a beautiful young woman whom the narrator immediately desires "for never was the purity of heaven in the soul more clearly reflected than from her calm black eye, nothing could be more beautifully majestic, and at the same time more sweetly feminine, than the bend of the head and the air with which she received [his] salutation" (232).

Like in so many short texts gathered here, the zest of the story lay in a narrative within the narrative, namely here the account of Velasques's tribulations, a literary device supposed to bring credit to what is told by giving it the appearance of the report of a true story set in scenes which, even if exotic, are nevertheless real places. This is the pretext to depict, in racially biased terms, the life of masters and slaves in early nineteenth-century Jamaica. Velasques's story reveals the great intimacy which existed between domestic slaves and their masters, which accounts for the fact that his young girl displays a great "knowledge of negro witchcraft far greater than [he] could have imagined, and what was worse, that she believed it" (237), not unlike his wife who "had been bred up in the same way" and who "was familiar with all the superstitions of the negroes" (236). Velasques thought that the superstitions generated by the Obi "might

[280] Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

be an excellent tiling to keep the rogues in subjection" (237), a point which may be contested, not only because of the tragedy which strikes his family, but because, like voodoo in Haiti, it was commonly used by the Africans as a means of resistance to slavery.[281]

The ideological position of the narrator, mirroring that of his host, is far from being that of an abolitionist, for the slaves are depicted in terms which make them as unreliable as wild beasts, like the beggar in the woods, "a gigantic negro, armed with a cutlass" and "confoundedly saucy" who seems to him as dangerous as "a tiger" (228); or as perfidious as Velasques's murderous nurse; or Congo Jane herself, "a reputed witch" (237), an "old hag" (239), "as sinister looking an object as you would care to behold " (237). These prejudices are corroborated by the recurrent use of derogatory terms such as "rogues" or "a gang of runaways that infested a neighboring district" (239), words however commonly used at the time in Jamaica to refer to African slaves.

Moreover, the narrator does not seem to disapprove of the repeated ill-treatments inflicted by Velasques to his slaves, whether it be whipping under the form of "nine and thirty" lashes, deportation, or downgrading in the hierarchy of tasks, from domestic responsibilities to working in the fields.[282] But beyond these punishments, authorized if not encouraged by slave codes, which were common practices at the time and exemplified the absolute power of the masters, the atrocious killing of the nursery maid, even inspired by vengeance, could hardly be admitted by the most hard-hearted American slaveholder. As Velasques reports allusively: "I watched the pile when she suffered till she was burned to a cinder" (239). As a matter of fact, the Jamaican slave code, until the late 1700s, allowed masters to punish their slaves by mutilating or putting the worst offenders to death by burning or starving them on gibbets.[283] Let us note here that

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281 About the importance of voodoo in Haitian history see Michel S. Laguerre, *Voodoo and Politics*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989; A. Metraux, *Voodoo in Haiti,* New York: Schocken Books, 1972.

282 See *supra* note 352.

283 It is only in later codes that the government's authority was delegated to the masters for minor crimes only, major offenses being judged in slave courts, composed of big planters and specific to English colonies. For further detail see Russell Smandych, "'To Soften the Extreme Rigor of Their Bondage': James Stephen's Attempt to Reform the Criminal Slave Laws of the West Indies, 1813-1833," *Law and History Review*, vol. 23, n° 3; Diana Patton, "Punishment, Crime, And The Bodies of Slaves in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica," *Journal of Social History*, Summer, 2001.

even if Velasques did not infringe the laws of his time and place, his cruelty is never denounced by the American narrator.

Incidents in the Life of a Quiet Man

This narrative, unsigned but written by Nathaniel Parker Willis,[284] is not actually a short-story but rather the account of a series of "incidents," as indicated in the title, which spice the life of a man who is decidedly not as "quiet" as he claims it at first. His personality, like his narration, seems effectively based on paradox, which is confirmed by his becoming a nurse by "accident" (242). His past aversion to sickness is then "associated in [his] mind with confinement and pain and everything repulsive" to such a degree that it suggests that he suffers from claustrophobia, so that he symptomatically "love[s] the open air with an eccentric affection" (242). His recovery is not less symptomatic for it transforms the previous signs of mental trouble into their very opposite, as he now indulges in "an unhealthy passion for scenes of this description" (242). This new passion reaches even the proportions of an addiction for "it has sated itself with one degree of misery after another, till now nothing satisfies it but the deepest—death or wild insanity—whatever tries the sufferer most, and demands in the spectator most of sympathy and nerve" (242). The narrator should be aware of the morbid side of his behavior when he confesses that "there is an excitement in the high-wrought circumstances which accompany sickness, which feeds in [him] a spring of curiosity, which [he] cannot but think, is one of the deepest seated cravings of [his] nature" (242). From claustrophobia to voyeurism, the narrator's recovery is only apparent.

The three "incidents" reported sound heterogeneous but they nevertheless share common traits that inform the reader on their very nature. First, the three of them occur in the dead of night and each

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284 The story was published anonymously, but the last section of it was revised and extended into a longer version entitled "The Lunatic's Skate" published in *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* of London (November 1834), and again in the author's *Inklings of Adventure* (1836). Willis (1806-1867) was then the editor of the *American Monthly Magazine* which he founded in 1829.

time the narrator is fascinated by the mystifying spectacle of the night outside. In the first narrative, the protagonist is captivated by "[t]he clear, sparkling snow [that] lay like fairy-work over the beautiful common, and the trees, laden with the feathery crystals, [which] look[] like motionless phantoms in the moonlight" (244). In the second one, "[t]here [i]s no moon, but the stars look[] near and bright, and the absolute silence and the sweet spiciness of the air combine[] with the solemnity of [his] vigil in giving the night almost a supernatural beauty" (246). The third episode takes place during a night with a full moon; neither his friend or the narrator can sleep, and, as they go out skating, they are captured by "[t]he extreme polish of the ice [which] sen[ds] us forward with very slight exertion at great speed, and it seem[s] to [the narrator] as if [they] shot over the long shadows from the shore with a superhuman swiftness" (249). "Fairy work," "motionless phantoms," "supernatural," "superhuman," the vocabulary used by the author belongs to the supernatural field.

The second common point is that the three extraordinary incidents concern the protagonist himself and another participant, but seem to be ignored of any other person. When he feels that he is about to be assaulted by the madman, the protagonist thinks of "shouting for assistance, but even if [he] had been heard by the sound sleepers in the rooms about [him], such noises are too common in college to excite anything but a curse on the rioter" (244). After his fight with the wild cat, he realizes that his "two fellow watchers, strangely enough, slept through it all" (244), and the solitary interminable ride of the two skaters seems to remain unnoticed.

Thirdly, each episode leads to a peaceful ending in which everything comes back to normal after a stormy, agitated night, as if nothing had happened. When the tutor finally enters the sick man's room, "the madman sl[inks] to his bed, and covering up his head lay as quiet as a child till morning" (245). After he strangled the cat, the narrator symbolically "washe[s] the blood from [his] hands, and composing the sheet as decently as [he] c[an] over the desecrated body, [he] resume[s] [his] walk and [his] excited thoughts till morning" (248), and when he wakes up in the morning following his midnight ride after a deep sleep in the open air by an unknown hunter's fire, he just "procure[s] a sleigh, with which, after a cold drive of forty miles [they] reach[] home at noon" (250). Each episode re-

spects the classic pattern according to which a return to order follows an unusually intense disorder. But in each case, no explanation is provided to account for the disorder, which makes these eerie narratives verge on the fantastic genre.

Finally, what typifies the three stories is above all violence and the apparent irrepressible blindness and meaninglessness in which it manifests itself. The madman looks as if "he was dreaming" (244) and vain are the efforts of the protagonist to calm him down with "the steadiness of [his] gaze" (244) as a hypnotist would do.[285] Moreover, he wants to kill the young student for no particular reason, only answering absurdly his question about his motives for murdering him: "I have found you alone, and I know you !" (245). Similarly, the necrophagous cat "d[oes] not seem to be aware of [his] approach, and [he] ha[s] grasped her round the throat with both [his] hands before she t[akes] the least notice of [him]" (248). In the same way, although in a less threatening register, the narrator's nightly ride soon "assume[s] a wildness which [he] trie[s] in vain to shake off" (249) as his companion, "wild with a mysterious fear" (249), skates as if he were alone, "speaking not a word, nor even turning his head when [they] pass[], as [they] d[o] occasionally, the glare of a hunter's fire" (249). All these stories stage characters, whether they be human or animal, who are the prey of some inner irrepressible "wild" drives which make them behave as if they were mad.

Madness, night and irrationality call to mind the domain of dreams and the unconscious, so that it is tempting to interpret the three stories as the reports of successive dreams made by the unquestionably neurotic narrator around whom each scenario is centered like in any oneiric production. They announce the murky, ambiguous universe of Edgar Allan Poe, in particular his tale "The Black Cat" (1843),[286] in which his protagonist hangs his favorite pet in a fit of neurotic violence, even if the necrophagous cat is white, a color which symbolizes ominousness and mystery in the three narratives:

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285 The main character in "The Crazy Eye" is more successful. Both stories refer more or less directly to the influential works of the Austrian physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815). See *supra* note 357.

286 For a psychological interpretation of Poe's tale see Ed Piacentino, "Poe's 'The Black Cat' as Psychobiography: some Reflections on the Narratological Dynamics" *Studies in Short Fiction*, Spring, 1998.

the snow in the first one, then the cat, then the ice in the last one. The wild madness affecting the sick man, the frenzied white cat, and to a lesser extent the skater who acts like a sleepwalker echo both Poe's mystery texts and the novels of Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810)[287] in which mental imbalance serves as a pretext to explore the meanders of the human psyche.

The Crazy Eye

The literary status of this narration may justifiably remain unclear to the modern reader. On the one hand, the author makes sure that his story will be received without prejudices by introducing it with sophisticated epistemological arguments on the relative validity of scientific knowledge, arguing learnedly that "even those maxims which we term *general laws*, are merely deductions from a limited number of facts, and may be superseded, at any time, by more extensive observations" (251). Then, to clear up suspicion, he adds that "as the incident took place within the last fifteen years, it has been thought advisable to suppress the names of the parties" (253), as if it were necessary, for deontological reasons, to keep secret the identity of presumed real persons. But on the other hand, the narrator introduces now and again touches of humor which may weaken the seriousness of his demonstration when he evokes tongue-in-cheek, for instance, the "testimony of many respectable keepers of mad-houses, who have found the success of the experiment [hypnotism] exceedingly precarious" (252). Moreover, although they are reported in a quite convincing and scrupulous tone, the two episodes related sound more like fictions than like objective accounts. However, the nineteenth-century reader was certainly impressed by the seriousness of the narration and many of them, influenced by the fascination of their time for paranormal phenomena, would not question the veracity of the testimony, in the same way as some of Poe's readers, abused by the author's sense of hoax, believed in the unexpected effects of Valdemar's "mesmeric trance."[288]

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[287] One thinks of his most popular work *Wieland; or, The Transformation* (1798) or more particularly of *Edgar Huntly Or Memoirs Of A Sleep Walker* (1799). See Marc Amfreville, *Charles Brockden Brown: La part du doute*. Paris: Belin, 2000.

[288] Edgar Allan Poe, "The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar" (1845).

The facts described evoke the modern word of "hypnotism," although the term was only coined in 1843 by the Scottish physician James Braid (1795-1860), in his seminal work "Neurypnology, or the Rationale of Nervous Sleep," in which, for the first time, the question was addressed scientifically.[289] However, when "The Crazy Eye" was written (1836), the term in use was still "mesmerism," after the controversial works of Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) on animal magnetism,[290] prolonged by the studies of his disciple John Elliotson (1791-1868) and those of the Marquis de Puységur (1751-1825) on somnambulism and "magnetic sleep." Noticeably, the narrative was published some eight years before Poe's "Mesmeric Revelation" (1844) in which the author presents a case of hypnotic condition in which the patient eventually dies, like Charles W—— and Sir William P——, and four years before the publication of Chauncy Hare Townshend's widely read *Facts in Mesmerism: With Reasons for a Dispassionate Inquiry into It* (London: 1840) from which Poe borrowed entire sentences.[291] The text is then unquestionably innovative,[292] not only by its topic but also because it is presented as a scientific communication openly developed "in the hope that it may lead to some further investigation of this remarkable phenomenon" (259), which will be done much later in relation with mental troubles in the 1880s in France by Charcot[293] or to a lesser extent by William James[294] in the United States.

Beyond its apparent scientific rigor, the text also possesses undeniable literary qualities which brings it close to the conventional genre of a fiction that takes the form of a real account. Although the

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289 Alhough Braid himself was well aware of the difference between sleep and "neurypnology," it is the term "hypnosis" which was remembered. For further detail on nineteenth-century practices of hypnotism, see Eric J. Dingwall (ed.) *Abnormal Hypnotic Phenomena—A Survey of Nineteenth-Century Cases* (1968).

290 In 1874, a Royal Commission, including prominent scientific figures among whom were Franklin (1706-1790), Lavoisier (1743-1794) and Guillotin (1738-1814), concluded that Mesmer's animal magnetism had no scientific reality. See also *supra* note 357.

291 See Roger Bozzetto, "Poe ou le visionnaire expérimental," *Métaphores* n°15/16, 1988.

292 Even if E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822) had already published "Der Magnetiser" (1813) in which a physician hypnotises a young woman to make her forget her fiancé.

293 Jean Martin Charcot (1825-1893) presented his works on hypnotism and hysteria to the French Academy of Sciences in 1882.

294 William James (1842-1910), whose book *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) founded psychology as a discipline in America.

phenomenon is not totally unknown in America, as the narrator mentions one case "in the western part of Pennsylvania" (252), the two anecdotes presented to illustrate the power of the eye on mentally imbalanced persons are staged in far-off England, which makes Great Britain appear as an exotic place in which inexplicable events occur recurrently. In the first narrative, "a gentleman of family and fortune" (253) learns on the eve of his wedding that he ha[s] been unduly disinherited by "a rich but miserly uncle . . . of which he [is] the direct heir" (253). The news precipitates the unfortunate bridegroom into an "unnatural exhilaration" (253) coupled with fits of wild agitation and uncontrollable aggressiveness. This (self-)destructive behavior is easy to interpret: his being barred from a legitimate genealogy, and consequently from a marriage conditioned by wealth, deprives Charles W—— of the brilliant future which constituted his reason to live, and which he prolongs in a desperate, almost suicidal attempt to gamble for big stakes.

The following day, his mental state has considerably worsened and the young man presents all the symptoms of a fit of mania. This is when the hypnotist meets the madman, which is most suggestively reported: "It was a strange sight,—the tall, athletic figure of my friend cowering before the slight and feeble form of the simple mechanic" (256). In this almost epic fight, the greatest importance is given to the look of the "tamer": "It was frightful. I cannot describe it . . . The iris seemed to be contracted, and, as it were, concentrated into the pupil, and the color had changed from hazel to a deep black ; the lids were half-shut ; and the whole character of the eye was what I may call snake-like" (256). The second case, that of Sir William P ——, "a considerable figure in the political world" and whose "death, I remember, created a great sensation in England" (257), is basically no different. The "spotless" (257) politician is challenged in his reliability while he cannot face his future on "the eve of an election" (257). At the peak of his political career, the old man can no longer stick to the rigid conservative principles that have been so far the indispensable struts of his character and his whole mental edifice collapses, all the more suddenly that the legitimacy of his position is harshly questioned. In both cases, the hypnotist takes the control of a broken personality in a way which could be authenticated by

modern psychoanalytic views both on hypnosis and psychoses.[295] As a matter of fact, both accounts, although they are second-hand, do not lack either accurateness or elegance of style, so that the narration itself appears to be tinged with a "supernatural" tone generated by the display of "a power which carries with it an appearance of something superhuman" (258), foreshadowing many of Poe's tales of horror also inspired by the torment of the human psyche.

Anna's Landing

Anna's life starts like a romance story set in an idyllic country in which water and land mingle harmoniously in a maze of rivers, lakes and islands, under the tutelary protection of "an immense elm" which "cannot be matched in New England" and "stands unrivalled and alone, seen far up and down the river, extending its arms over it like a protecting genius" (260). Anna herself is a girl with an "indescribable softness in her face" (261), betrothed since childhood to Alfred, "a ward of her father's" (262) whom she plans to marry when she reaches the age of eighteen with her father's unrestricted blessing.

The sequel of the story oscillates between the relation of Anna's tragic destiny and a fierce criticism of religious fanaticism. In the village of P., the narrator notices ironically that although the inhabitants are "in the main, intelligent, and many of them wealthy and indued with the polish of a city education, yet there [is] among them a general want of religious knowledge" (262). By opposing intelligence and obscurantism, the narrator stigmatizes those who "divest[] themselves of reason's aid altogether, and place[] themselves in the capacity and attitude of children, not at the feet of Christ, but of his ministers" (262). The representatives of God on Earth are then seen as potentially dangerous hypocrites endowed with the ability to manip-

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[295] Let's remember that Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Josef Breuer (1842-1925) discovered psychoanalysis thanks to their works on hypnosis published in their *Studies on Hysteria* (1895). For more advanced theories on the etiology of psychoses, see Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), *The Seminar, Book III. The Psychoses*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, transl. by Russell Grigg, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1993.

ulate those who naively ascribe "confidence to impudence and imposture, and respectability, and even reverence, to ignorance and stolidity" (263). In the middle of the eighteenth century, the popular religious turmoil caused by the Great Awakening (1730s-1750s)[296] favored both breach of trust and misuse of power. Unscrupulous preachers had then the opportunity to manipulate crowds of believers, and like Louis Beebee, they effectively often promoted "some doctrines, which [according to the narrator] it seems blasphemous to impute to the character of Jehovah" (264).

Significantly, the text was published during the Second Great Awakening (1820s-1840s), a wave of religious revival which swept throughout the country to the remote areas of the Frontier where isolated pioneers convened in camp meetings to hear the passionate sermons of preachers who sometimes had limited religious education. The author's fierce denunciation of the "unaccountable mistiness" (262) which veiled religious rationality, his advocation of reason and his praise of the harmony of nature suggests that the text is one of the numerous literary writings purposely published by Unitarians—they often refused royalties from their publishers—to promote the ideals of Rationalist Unitarianism as opposed to Calvinism or, as it is the case presented here, any "foul perversion of the gospel" (266) and religious fanaticism.[297] Louis Beebee, preaching under the tutelary elm, consequently appears as a usurper of the divine authority.

Alfred Darrach undoubtedly appears as one of the author's fictional representatives both because of their common admiration for Anna, and on account of their religious positions as they apparently share a "disgust at most of the preachers" and are "opposed to revivals as managed by them" (264). Being a rational mind, Alfred diagnoses rightly the cause of Anna's troubles and he condemns Beebee in terms which reveal the true essence of the mental perturbation affecting his fiancée: "this Beebee— the incubus that sits upon your

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296 See note 365.

297 Such was the case, for instance, of the Bostonian William Austin (1778-1841), the author of "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man" (1824, 1826, 1827). For further detail see Joseph A. Zimbalatti, *Anti-Calvinist Allegory: A Critical Edition of William Austin's "Peter Rugg the Missing Man" (1824-1827)* Fordham University, Ann Arbor, MI, 1992; Under the aegis of the American Unitarian Association founded in 1825, many Unitarian writers in Boston were the propagandists of their liberal ethics against the strictness of Puritanism; see Lawrence Buell, "The Literary Significance of the Unitarian Movement," *American Unitarianism, 1805-1865*, Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society Studies, 1989.

peace of mind—should know his place" (265). Alfred correctly identifies the murky nature of Beebee's influence on Anna's mind: like an incubus, he is the cause of nightmares whose contents are not devoid of secret sexual fantasies,[298] which utterly justifies Alfred's jealousy. Beebee, "a man in the prime of life" (264) whose age was relevantly that of the Christ when he died, reveals the intensity of his feelings for Anna by his gaze which "betray[s] the smothered fire within" (265). "Struck with the uncommon loveliness of Anna Lowell" (266), he literally seduces her "with argument and scripture" (267) so that she becomes so tragically torn "between love and reason" that "in her weak state, . . . reason fled forever" (267).

The ending of the narrative does not rest only on the confirmation of "Anna's insanity" (267) and her realizing that she was abused for, as she piteously repeats "there is no scripture, for that" (267). It proposes a twofold epilogue which gives the narrative a touch of inscrutable mystery that goes beyond the understanding of the reader. On the one hand, it is clear that after her meeting with Beebee, Anna's health gradually deteriorates, and from being dejected and affected by "a general debility and nervousness" (265) she becomes progressively devoid of all physical substance, walking "with the noiseless step of a spirit, and . . . smiling occasionally the painful smile of idiocy" (266) before she vanishes body and soul, her physical disappearance symbolizing her abandonment of her earthly existence. However, the enigma of Anna's disparition remains unsolved as "it seem[s] as if she [was] spirited from the earth without leaving any trace of her passage" (268). On the other hand, if the disappearance of Beebee has for some time remained unexplained —"the bird had flown, and never more was he seen in the vale of the Ashawang" (266)—, the narrator provides a last-minute explanation which preserves the preacher's reputation by excluding that he was an ordinary crook by stigmatizing the irrational danger represented by the unhealthy "unlimited influence over the thoughts, actions and habits" (264) that some ministers can display when they endeavor to convert believers like Anna, whose "searching, wandering spirit f[inds] no rest" (264). From a propagandist's point of view, the

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298 See *supra* note 366.

demonstration is certainly more convincingly efficient than most philosophical or theological arguments.

The Cold Hand; a Tale

Here is a story, published in 1837, presented as a pitiable and dramatic testimony which, according to the narrator, should be read as a "warning" (269) by some readers who may profitably recognize in it the echoes of their own tribulations. It is based on a classic quandary about love and jealousy which assumes in its first section the traits of a pathetic parable about appearances and what they are supposed to reveal: an unattractive face reflects a dry heart, whereas physical beauty harbors a pure soul. The narrator, who is "the ugliest of all mortals" (269), feels consequently rejected although she "wishe[s] to be social and love mankind" (270), whereas her handsome sister's undeniable qualities are universally praised, which "till[s] [her] heart with jealousy and rage" (271) and entails "a sort of indefinite malignity towards her, which prompt[s] [her] to an indefinite revenge" (271).

Devoured by an overwhelming feeling of envy, Catharine intrigues by manipulating her sister's suitors so that she slyly contributes to Jane's increasing state of depression which coincides with a fit of "consumption" (279) that is fatal to her "just three months after the news arrived" (279) of the tragic death of her lover. From then on, Catharine's feelings change radically for, to put it in her favorite poet's words, if "envy feeds on the living, it fades away after their death".[299] Jealousy gives way to a devastating feeling of guilt as "all [her] turpitude c[omes] rolling on [her] mind" (279) so that she "resolve[s] to put an end to [her] life" (280). But during the night she is willing to drown herself, she is impressed by "a large black cloud, gleaming with lightning, surcharged with thunder, . . . spreading its vast, gloomy wings over the mountain" (280), a brewing storm which seems as ominously vengeful as the thunderstorm pursuing William Austin's blasphemous protagonist Peter Rugg, whose wanderings are unendingly followed by a black cloud "doubling and trebling itself, and rolling up . . . steadily, as if its sole design was to

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[299] "Pascitur in vivis livor; post fata quiescit." Ovid, *Amorum* (I, 15, 39).

deluge some object".[300] In both narratives, heaven's wrath is similarly symbolized, but here the protagonist's fatal gesture is arrested *in extremis* by "a very heavy clap of thunder" which "sh[akes] [her] to the soul" and "suspend[s] [her] purpose" (280). The divine powers have planned another destiny for the morbidly envious woman in which she may have a second chance to rid her soul from the ravages of the capital sin, a redemption apparently decided by Heavens in conformity with the Calvinist theology in which God alone can accomplish the salvation of the sinner.

Catharine's subsequent experience with opiates sounds like a resurrection. Persisting in her "purpose of self-destruction" (281), she "resolve[s], therefore, . . . to take a quantity of opium, which should quiet [herself], if possible, for ever" (281) and soon "th[inks] [she] [i]s dying . . . and dreadful [are] the pangs of separation" (282). Then follows a description of her phantasms while she is under the influence of opium as if she "lie[d] under the weight of incubus and nightmare"[301], in a manner which reminds one of the narcotic experiences of Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859). Being the prey of "an unspeakable horror" (282), Catharine, threatened by horrid monsters and chimeras, repeatedly feels "a cold hand [that] would gently press [her] forehead[,] [which] [i]s inconceivably horrible" (282), so that she thinks she is dying when she "faint[s], and lo[ose] [her] consciousness" (282) until "there c[omes] a little smiling cherub . . . with two looking-glasses in his hand, on the backs of which [i]s written—THIS FOR THE BODY ; THIS FOR THE MIND" (283). The sudden revelation of her hideousness, both physical and mental, is so unbearable that Catharine exclaims, in an insight of what psychoanalysis would later on call "repression"[302]: "'Divide me from myself' . . . 'separate my consciousness from my memory, or I am undone for ever'" (284). Anticipating the Freudian perspective, this cathartic confrontation with the hidden part of herself in dreams leads Catharine to ac-

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300 William Austin (1778-1841), *Peter Rugg, the Missing Man* (1824, 1826, 1827).

301 Thomas de Quincey, *Confession of an English Opium Eater* (1822).

302 In the same vein, de Quincey has a seminal intuition of the timeless nature of the Freudian unconscious ; "There is no such thing as forgetting possible to the mind; a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind; accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil; but alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever" (*Confession of an English Opium Eater*).

cept her true nature and gives her the strength to continue to live on less unhealthy bases. In "the after-dream of the reveller upon opium —the bitter lapse into everyday life—the hideous dropping off of the veil",[303] she turns to God and humbly but courageously resolves to "dedicate [her]self to the business of making every body around [herself] as happy as possible" (285).

Interestingly, Catharine begins to behave like her sister Jane used to, and when she "hear[s] of objects of distress, [she] immediately fl[ies] to relieve them" (285), as if she ought to replace her now that she was dead, a common reaction in the mourning process which corresponds to a masked denial of the disappearance of the deceased.[304] In this case, it consequently obliterates Catharine's responsibility in her sister's too early death by timely soothing her overwhelming sense of guilt. Moreover, her need to be retributed for what she did makes her undergo the same maltreatments she used to inflict on the only family she still has, and she accepts without flinching her father's constant "fretfulness" (286). Echoing her oneiric experience, she sees "[her]self pictured in him" and "resolve[s] that his impatient temper should be the monitor to [hers]" (286).

However, her hatred has not vanished but its object has changed and now she "bear[s] malice and ill-will to nothing under heaven, except [her] own former character ; *that* [she] perfectly hate[s]" (287). Catharine's evil drives have not calmed down but roles have changed: her father is now as bad-tempered as she used to be, and she is as charitable as her dead sister. The two of them restore and prolong the pair of opposites which she formed with her sister, but Catharine is now endowed with the role of the "agreeable woman," and though "she is not handsome[,] she looks less like the devil than she used to" (288). Beyond its unquestionable moralistic vocation, this tale interestingly reveals that its author had some seminal insights of what psychoanalysis would theorize some seventy years later, corroborating Freud's conviction that poets and novelists are "with regard to the knowledge of the soul, masters of all of us."[305]

303 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839).

304 See Sigmund Freud's essay "Mourning and Melancholy" (1917).

305 Sigmund Freud, *Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's* Gradiva (1907).

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A Mystery of the Sea.

Any one who is at all conversant with seamen, knows that superstition forms a striking feature in the character of that numerous and useful class. Men of iron frames and nerves of proof, who shrink not

> "When the battle rages loud and long,
> And the stormy tempests bow,"[306]

are known to give credence to such tales of supernatural horror as 'the Flying Dutchman'[307] and others that have not half the claims of that romantic legend upon the imagination. Have you been upon the ocean on a starlight night, with a few clouds hurrying along the sky, dark and swiftly, and the sea rough, but black as ink, and fathomless ? On such a night, have you marked a group by the vessel's side, earnestly attentive to some tarry veteran, as with that low and almost whispered tone that is in such admirable keeping with the subject, and which seems to imply a belief in the old proverb, that "a certain character" is always nearest when we are talking of him, and with that accent and look of implicit belief in what he is saying which gives the supernatural its climax of effect, he doles forth the experience of some brother of the craft in nautical demonology ? And if you became interested in the story, as the contagious influence of the scene and its associations will surely make you, and caught the sighing of the wind, as it traversed the melancholy waste ; and the fitful song of the look-out in the top as it swelled and

306 Verses from "Ye Mariners of England" (1801), a poem by Thomas Campbell (1777-1844).

307 The legendary Dutch captain of a phantom ship bound to sail the seas eternally.

died on the breeze, like the accompaniment of a spirit of the air, you have felt most powerfully, despite your skepticism, the cold fingers of superstition creeping upon your heart. Though your countenance may have worn the forced smile of incredulity, my life on it, you did not shake off that icy grasp so easily. Your dreams, for a night, at least, were of chimeras dire ; and that mysterious tone and melancholy song have haunted you since. It would seem, that, removed from the haunted precincts of the churchyard, the abbey and deserted castle—"her ancient solitary reign"[308]—superstition would not stop with the shore, nor seek her prey upon the solitude of the ocean. But she "can call spirits from the vastly deep,"[309] and the dead are strewed upon its bottom like pebbles. But were it not so, and were its sands sown with pearls instead of corpses, disdaining the natural law of associations she could call up a creation of non-descript monsters, like the incongruous visions of an incubus, or the hideous abominations of Hindoo worship. Such, generally, is the character of nautical superstition—wild as the domain over which it broods, unsystematised as the beings whom it rules with despotic power. The demonology of the landsman seldom seeks any other spirits from the shades, than those of departed men. On the wave, all fear of them vanishes, and the spirits, which even ghosts are said to dread, bear immediate rule. And why ? There rise no monuments on the watery plain to tell, "Hic jacet,"[310] or to tether the spirit that has flown. Crime leaves no record there but in the living hell within the bosoms of its authors. The waves mourn, and sweep over the pirate's bloody track, and who shall point to the spot where the deed was done ?

> "Man marks the earth with ruin : his control
> Stops with the shore,"[311]

nor does there exist upon the wide blue sea, one solitary memento, to give to any act of his, whether good or ill, a local habitation. But the ocean—the glorious ocean, is full of poetry ; and poetry and superstition are gathered from the same field, by the same minister, imagina-

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308 Thomas Gray (1716-1771) "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1768): "Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower / The moping owl does to the moon complain / Of such as, wandering near her secret bower, / Molest her ancient solitary reign."

309 William Shakespeare (1564-1616), *King Henry IV* (Part I: Act III, scene 1).

310 Latin phrase for "here lies."

311 Lord Byron (1788-1824), *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (canto IV, st. 179) .

tion. The materials for each are the same, and take their shape and color after entering the mind, like the different modifications which light undergoes in eyes of different constructions ; forming, on the retina of one, a confused and incongruous spectrum, and of another, a beautiful and faithful copy of all the objects of vision. Whether the fearful beauties of the deep, its flashing waters, and its clouds that brush the firmament like the sweep of mighty wings kindle in the soul the extatic dreams of poesy, or the living horrors and grovelling fears of superstition, depends altogether upon the character of the mind, and the light which has been shed upon it by education.

Once, poetry and superstition were nearly synonymous, and exerted a united influence upon the minds of men. Witness the fictions of the ancient bards. Poets were the high priests of the invisible world, and palmed upon the simple minds of the age their own creations for divine realities. But thanks be to Heaven, the mind at length is free. Truth has set her seal upon all the efforts of human genius. The gilding has fallen off the absurdities of old, and superstition, stripped of her tinsel robe, stands alone, palpable and odious. Still, however, does she lurk in the bye-ways and corners of the earth. On the desert of the ocean too, she has a throne, surrounded with peculiar horrors, that shall last, while "they who go down upon the deep in ships,"[312] shall have among them so many of the weak and the ignorant. I would by no means put this imputation upon the whole of a class to which our country owes so much of its wealth and honors. Of course, I am speaking of common sailors. And neither would I impute it to *them* were I not acquainted with its cause and its remedy. Every one knows a sailor's belief in omens. And many on his catalogue are true, and can be accounted for on natural principles. He understands the signs of the sky perfectly, and can predict the winds and weather in a manner, that, to a novice, is perfectly unaccountable. But he stops not here. He is led on to trust in others for which philosophy has no support, and of which the like would never be dreamed of on land, but by some bed-ridden beldame of eighty. Thus, a whale, throwing up his flukes, brings a storm ; a shoal of porpoises at night is accounted unlucky ; and I have heard the captain of a New York brig order a cock's head to be wrung off,

312 "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord; and his wonders in the deep" (Psalm 107: 23-24).

for crowing at the unseasonable hour of nine at night. These and the like notions being at times unluckily confirmed by striking coincidences, become matters of experience, and stand as high in a seaman's estimation as the signs of the weather. Thus, in the example above alluded to, it was not six hours after the cock had crowed his unlucky vespers, when it came on to blow the most violent gale that I ever witnessed. The whale had shown his flukes, and the porpoises visited us, on the same evening. This observation of signs and omens, which is the natural result of the solitude of his situation, is a principal cause of the sailor's inclination for the marvellous. He is shut out from all other cares but to know whether his wind is to be fair, and the seas smooth. To ascertain these, his eyes are abroad upon the book of nature, striving to read, in its various leaves, the sky, the stars, the clouds, and waters, the dim, but legible traces of his destiny. And if he is thus enabled to understand things which to other men are a mystery, and was once to himself, is it to be wondered at, if, at times, he thinks his vision can go farther, and there, read lessons with which reason and philosophy have no fellowship. Is it to be wondered at, that, shut out from his race, imagination should introduce beings of his own to give animation to the dreadness that broods over the waste of the ocean ? I have said that the creations of the fancy depend mainly on the temperament of the man, and the structure and cultivation of his mind. To the man of well balanced mind solitude has no terrors. He can sit upon a lonely height, and look abroad upon the handy-work of his Maker, with the pleasure of an epicure at a banquet. He can luxuriate upon the means of life and happiness that are afforded to every living creature ; or, if the scene lacks inhabitants, his imagination will never call up beings that will defile this beautiful earth. But who are they that tremble at their shadow when alone ? Who that shrink in the solitude of the forest as if malignant eyes were fastened on them, and not *that* eye which watched over their birth, and never slumbers nor sleeps ? Who view, in each glancing star, or light from the marsh, presages of evil ; and hear, in each sigh of the wind, unheavenly and unearthly voices ? Who, but the weak in mind ? Who but those whose estrangement from society has nearly obliterated the faint traces of an imperfect education ? And who but such men are our common sailors ? The book of nature is open to both, but different are the lessons which

they read there. To one, it is a sublime source of morals, and its pages are filled with pictures of the beautiful and glorious ; to the other, it brings terror, and the heads of monsters meet him whatever leaf he turns. Thus, the same fountain, it would seem, literally sends forth sweet waters and bitter. But it must be told them that nothing bitter flows from that exhaustless reservoir which the God of nature has opened to quench the immortal thirst. It is the corruption of their own palates. Correct these, and they shall know the pleasure which a rational man feels, whenever he views the ocean or the landscape, be it in sunshine or in storm—a pleasure, like a spring to the pilgrim in the desert, and which we must believe to be of that kind that will not cease to flow in upon the soul, in its eternal march towards perfection.

For me, the churchyard has no terrors. I have walked it at all hours and in every different mood. Not that I do not believe in the supernatural. There are accounts recorded of the walking in this world of the tenants of the next, to which I know not what to answer ; and, at which, to laugh or sneer, in my opinion, argues as much weakness as to take for gospel every old wife's legend. But I have walked it merely for meditation ; and the idea of encountering the spirits of the dead who slumber there, never crossed my mind. If thought of them arose at all, it was but to think of that eternal home to which they have gone, and the voice from the grave was not one of alarm, but of heavenly, though solemn warning. And never while there, have the frightful tales of the nursery obtruded themselves upon me. The dead have nothing to ask at my hands ; and the powers of the air, as well as their prince, cannot go beyond the length of that chain with which omnipotence has bound them. By this time I have perhaps raised a smile on the face of some sceptic, and am set down for as arrant a believer in ghosts and witches as any old woman in Cotton Mather's day,[313] or the venerable historian himself. My creed on the subject, so far as it suited my purpose, I have stated. All tales of the kind are directly in the teeth of reason, and counter to our imaginary laws of the spiritual world ; yet, still I say, there are some so well attested, that despite of all my philosophy, I dare not gainsay them. And now to our story.

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313 Cotton Mather (1663-1728), American Puritan clergyman and writer of Boston, author of the influential *Memorable Providences Relating to Witchcraft and Possessions* (1689) and *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693).

In the capital of one of our New England States,[314] resides captain Sharp. Twenty-five years ago, he commanded a ship in the Russian trade but he has long been retired from the sea. It is a most happy life which the seaman leads, when enabled to leave his boisterous profession, and to settle down, for the remainder of his days, upon a competency in the bosom of his early home. When a squall rises he can lie and hear it ; he has no topsail halyards to stand by. Such is the situation of Capt. Sharp. Let me add, that an hour's conversation will convince any one that he is neither an ignorant nor a weak-minded man ; and that the patronage of the most eminent merchants in Rhode Island, in early life, and the unqualified esteem of a large circle of friends *now*, are sufficient testimonials in favor of his probity.

It was in the year 1804 that Capt. Sharp returned from a European voyage. The gentleman in whose family I reside, and whom I have known and respected for years, was then living at Pawtuxet,[315] on the Narraganset Bay.[316] He saw the ship pass up the bay, and on the day following called upon the Captain at Providence. The Captain received him with a warm greeting.

"I am glad to see you," said he ; "I am glad to see every body—in a word, I rejoice that I am once more safe upon the *terra firma* of Rhode Island."

"Rather unnatural for a seaman, that last expression," observed Mr. T—.

"By no means—by no means ;" said the Captain, "the most inveterate sea dog of us all, would be glad to be set on shore after such a voyage."

"Anything extraordinary ?" inquired Mr. T—.

"Extraordinary ? Yes—no—we have had seamen's luck, fair winds and foul, but, on the whole, a pretty fair run ; yet," said he, dropping his voice, "I would not make exactly another such a voyage, for the best ship that sails out of Providence."[317]

"You talk mysteriously," said Mr. T—.

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314 *I.e.* Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

315 Pawtucket, a city near Providence, Rhode Island, on the Blackstone River.

316 Deeply indenting Rhode Island, Narragansett Bay was the home of the Narragansett Indians nearly exterminated during King Philip's War (1675-1676).

317 State capital of Rhode Island, situated on the Narragansett Bay, founded by Roger Williams (c.1603–1683) in 1636.

"I do ;" said the Captain ; "and the mischief of it is I must still talk mysteries if I endeavor to explain myself. As we are alone, however, you shall hear, if you have time to listen."

After a moment's pause he proceeded. "What I have to say, shall be, without note or comment, a simple tale of facts. An opinion upon those facts, of course, I have ; but there is no necessity of my publishing it ; ĩ shall therefore merely tell my story, and leave you and every one who may hear it hereafter, to put upon it what interpretation they please. We were bound, you will recollect, for St. Petersburgh.[318] The ship was in the stream, all ready for sea, excepting that we lacked a hand. In those days, before the embargo and non-intercourse,[319] when we were reaping golden harvests of the sea while Europe was fighting, it was at times difficult to get experienced seamen. After I had waited a whole day, a short, white-livered fellow presented himself, and though I did not like his looks, I concluded to ship him. I love to see a man who will occasionally give me a full, square look in the face. If there is sometimes impudence in it there generally is honesty. There was not a man on board the Charlotte, who could say that he ever caught Michael Dodd's eye long enough to tell its colour. Though his frame was large, he was lean almost to emaciation, and pale, as I said before, like one in a consumption. Altogether, with his unsocial habits, hanging look, and strange mark on his right arm, that looked as if it were done with blood instead of India ink or gunpowder, he was a confounded disagreeable fellow. On the outward bound voyage, however, he did his duty tolerably well, though he was never known to give a right seaman's pull, nor to join in that most cheering of songs, 'Yo-heave-ho !' There seemed, in fact, to be something tugging heavily at his heart, whether remorse or sorrow we could not divine. There were times too when he would take no food, and refuse it when offered, more with the speechless loathing of a sick dog than like a rational creature. We soon, however, became accustomed to his ways, and as he held intercourse with no one farther than his duty made it necessary,

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318 Founded by Peter the Great (1672-1725) in 1703, St Petersburg became the capital of Russia in 1712 and in the 19th century was Russia's main seaport.

319 The Embargo Act (1807) passed under Jefferson's presidency (1801-1809) forbade all international trade to and from American ports in retaliation to British and French restrictive commercial policies. It was superseded by the Non-intercourse Act (1809), resuming international trade except with Britain and France, soon replaced by Macon's Bill No. 2 (1810), which put an end to an ineffective experiment which weighed too heavily on the American economy.

none knew any more about him when we reached Cronstadt,[320] than when we shipped him, and thought less.

We were advanced more than fifteen hundred miles on the homeward bound passage, when one morning, as I was passing forward, I overheard the following conversation. "I wish to my soul," said Jones, one of our best men, to Dodd, who was leaning over the vessel's side and gazing at the water, in a kind of trance, "I wish to my soul, brother, you would manage to do your talking upon deck, and let the watch below have a chance to sleep, instead of doing double duty. For one, I had as lief be keel-hauled as to be broke of my natural rest in this way."

Dodd turned upon him with a gleam of uncommon fierceness, but the expression passed away in a moment, and with a melancholy air he resumed his former position.

"I shall not trouble you long," he said, in a quiet tone.

"The shorter the better, my dear fellow," said the other, "If you are to carry your tongue between your teeth all day, like a pin in a smith's vice, and then talk to yourself, or, may be, the devil, all night."

Dodd answered not, but with folded arms and a drooped head, moved quietly by the irritated young seaman, into the forecastle.

I bade Jones follow me aft. "And now," said I, "what is the matter between you and Dodd ?"

"It is even as I say, sir," replied he. " Since we got clear of the British islands, there has been no sleeping for Dodd ?"

"Explain," said I.

"Why sir, you know, that when upon deck, he has not a word to throw to a dog ; but below, and when he ought to be asleep, his mouth is afloat."

"You are not obliged to talk to him."

"Lord sir, if he was talking to us, we should care less about it. But there he lies in his birth, and mutters and groans like a man in a fit of the nightmare. Then he will thrash round and halloo, "They are coming !" "They are coming !" "There !" "There !" And this has been the tune for a week. "Tis very troublesome," said Jones very de-

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320 A fortified Russian seaport near St Petersburg founded by Peter the Great (1672-1725) in 1710.

cidedly ; "for if he has a mind to hold conversation with the devil, I, for one, don't want to listen to it."

"Conversation with the devil ?"

"Aye, sir ; with whom else should a fellow, who carries Lucifer's mark in his forehead as well as on his right arm, hold converse when honest folks would be sleeping ? And the moment any of us ask what ails him, or mayhap give him a hearty curse, mum—not a word from Dodd ; but no sooner are we cleverly asleep, than his eternal howl breaks in again, and 'tis "They are coming !" "They are coming !" and "There !" and "There !" till the morning watch."

"The fellow has bad dreams," said I.

"A man don't have the same dream seven nights in a week for nothing," said Jones. "He is enough to make us all think we are haunted."

I confess I was puzzled, and not a little appalled at this account. I knew not what to say, so bade Jones go to his duty. The next morning the same report was made by Jones and confirmed by all the men of his watch ; some of whom feared and all hated the singular being whose existence was now become a curse to others as well as to himself. I had remarked that his look had become more haggard : his eye had almost entirely disappeared in its deep socket, and his whole deportment was strange in the extreme. Things grew so bad at last that I was fearful some of the men might do Dodd a mischief ; for they were all goaded to madness, some by loss of rest, and others by the supernatural fears which his ravings excited. I determined therefore to take him out of the forecastle. Three days after my first conversation with Jones, I ordered Dodd to come down and lodge in the cabin, the coming night. He received the command with the utmost indifference, and at eight o'clock, came down and turned in. He lay perfectly still, and to appearance, asleep, for two hours. I began to think that the fit would not come on that night, to observe which with my own eyes had been a principal motive with me in bringing him into the cabin. It was my watch on deck ; consequently I had not joined in. I had been sitting by the table for more than an hour, leaning on my hand over a book, till I was almost fallen asleep, when I was startled by a most unearthly voice. "They are coming ! They are coming !" cried Dodd. He was half sitting up, and grasping convulsively the forward part of the birth, and his look was most hor-

rible. His eyes were started into view from their deep sockets, like pale fires from the tomb, and fixed on vacancy with such an unnatural light in them ! " There !" he repeated, pointing with his finger, "they are coming !" "Who ?" said I. "At twelve o'clock," again he uttered, in a voice that was heard from the bottom of his chest, "At twelve ! they are coming !"

I felt my blood curdle. "Lie down in your birth, Dodd," said I, "and be quiet. He turned his eyes upon me with a glance, such as I have thought a dead man might give, had his eyes motion, and then groaned out ; "Ah, I shall not trouble you long. They are coming, at twelve o'clock ! they are coming ! they are coming !" he continued to murmur, as he shrunk down into the birth and huddled the clothes over him, his voice dying away like a sound retreating to a distance.

I will confess that my blood did not resume its wonted flow for many minutes ; especially, as the miserable man continued to lie before me, writhing and groaning in what I could not avoid considering the anticipated agonies of the damned. What could have been his crime ? Thought upon the subject returned back upon itself, baffled and bewildered. A few minutes after eleven Dodd again raised himself in the birth, in a posture of deep attention. Then he whispered to himself and pointed with his finger. At the same moment, I heard loud voices on the deck.

"What is it Baxter ?" asked the man at the helm.

The answer came from a distant part of the ship and I did not hear it distinctly, but it was something about a light. The next moment, the mate hurried down the stairs. "We have made a light, sir," said he in great alarm.

"A light in the middle of the Atlantic !" said I.

"Yes, sir, dead ahead, and not five miles off. If we were a thousand miles farther west I should swear it was Point Judith light."[321]

I hastened upon deck. A little upon our weather bow, say half a point, and apparently six or eight miles off was a bright steady light like that of a common light-house. "How long since you made it ?" I inquired of the mate.

"It may be ten minutes, sir. I took it at first to be a ship's light, but it cannot be, for it bears now as when we first made it."

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321 Point Judith Lighthouse, in the Narragansett Bay (Rhode Island), announcing Providence.

The night was overcast and dark, and it could not have been a star. "What is the nearest land ?" I again inquired of the mate.

"The Western Islands[322] are some three hundred miles to the south ward, and Newfoundland three times that distance west."

The question had been put mechanically, rather than for information, for I knew by my own reckoning that our voyage was but little more than half completed. I studied the light attentively. It kept its first bearing exactly. I puzzled my invention as to what it might be. I looked at it again, and then at my men. Their eyes were fixed on my face ; but I was obliged to shake my head and turn away in utter inability to solve the mystery. My eyes fell upon a figure seated by himself upon the binnacle. His hat was pulled over his eyes, his hands crossed before him, and his head dropped upon his breast, like a condemned criminal. It was Dodd. In spite of reason, the conviction flashed upon me that there was some mysterious connection between him and the strange light. I took up a convenient position with the determination of watching him narrowly. My eye wandered from his motionless figure to the light with the vague expectation of —I know not what. I took out my watch. It wanted just fifteen minutes of twelve. I fastened my eye firmly upon him, determined not to remove it till that hour which formed a link in the dreadful associations of his mind was passed. But how often in our eagerness to gain some end do we overleap it ; and when there are in favor of our success an hundred chances to one, that fated one is turned up to us. I had watched Dodd I presume more than twice fifteen minutes, when something, I could never tell what, called off my attention. I turned my eye from my left shoulder forward ; the light was there, and bright and steady as before. I turned it back upon the binnacle. Dodd was gone ; and then forward again ; the light had vanished and it was just twelve o'clock ?

Search was made for Dodd all over the vessel, but never more was he seen on board the Charlotte. I cannot describe to you the dismay of my men, as they stood around me at that moment. They evidently felt that eyes not of earth nor heaven were fastened on them, and they clustered together, as if each feared that his turn would come next.

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322 The Hebrides, a group of more than 500 islands off the western coast of Scotland.

Strange as it may seem, no one had seen Dodd or the light at the moment of disappearance. They were gone—and that was all we knew. Had I communicated to the crew any intention of watching, we might have seen but to tell the truth, I was ashamed to let any one know the strange suspicions that haunted me. I do not pretend to say what the mysterious light was, nor what became of Dodd. The master of a ship has cares enough without tormenting himself with pointless speculations on the agency or non-agency of malignant spirits. I state these therefore merely as facts that happened under my own observation, and which I confess my inability to explain.

Reader, this is no fiction. Captain Sharp is living only forty miles from the place where I am now writing, and "can be produced." But think not that I relate these facts to make proselytes to a creed of which you will perhaps set me down as the apostle. Far from it. Only, scoff not at things which thou dost not understand. "Thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit,"[323] nor in what fearful extent the sons of men may offend. Enough is it if we let not our belief in the marvellous sink into the superstition of the vulgar ; and whether ghosts walk or not, whether the spirits of evil are ever permitted to claim their victims in this world, will never be worth the decision of a man who, according to his talent, endeavors to answer the end of his existence.

S. H.

Westerly, R. I.[324]

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[323] Ecclesiastes: 11-5.

[324] A town situated at the extreme southwest of Rhode Island.

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The Hermit of Agualta.

Beautiful as a poet's dream of that dawn "when the morning stars sang together,"[325] broke the 17th day of May, 18—. Silent lay the glassy, slumbering sea, and motionless the mist upon the blue hill's side, catching, successively, from the increasing light, the hues of purple, crimson and violet. And soft as a distant spirit's murmur, fell the hundred springs of Agualta[326] from the impending heights, libations from nature's cup to Him, who made "the dayspring to know its place."[327] I believe, that if I were to live an hundred years within the tropics, the inexpressible beauties of the morning would still come upon me like a spell. I never could resist its influences, but, on some green hill, or by the sea-beat shore, would meet its first indications, inhaling the fresh air with the zest of that delicate epicure, the camelion ; and turning to each point of the compass, with the boundless wish that I had an eye that could command a whole horizon. If to prefer communion with nature to the companionship of men be misanthropy, then, I fear, I must be entered with that ill-favored class of bipeds. But whether the feeling be natural to my bosom or not, it was nurtured in the tropics, where pleasant indeed must be the feast of reason or flow of soul, that can lure a man naturally reserved, from the greenest woods and brightest waters on which the sun shines ; and where man has done his utmost to make the contrast between nature and himself as glaring as possible. There are none "whose passion pulses beat like yours." You must either

325 "When the morning Stars sang together, / and all the Sons of God shouted for joy" (*Book of Job* 38-7). Title of a watercolor by William Blake (1757-1827) for *The Book of Job*. (1820).

326 Agualta Vale, a place on the northern coast of Jamaica, in the parish of St Mary.

327 "Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days began, / And caused the dayspring to know its place; / That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, / And the wicked be shaken out of it?" (*The Book of Job*: 38: 12-13).

forswear your nature, and plunge madly into the sweeping tide of worldly pursuits and unworthy pleasures, or retire to the mountain or the seashore, where you can feel that however "glory or freedom fade, yet nature still is fair."[328] You will return from your solitude, it is true, with a poorer relish for the intercourse of men, but I maintain it, your heart will not be the worse ; you would relieve the distresses of the most abandoned of the beings you shun, far more cheerfully than would any of his mates. This is not misanthropy. The spirit that stands open handed to alleviate the woes incident to mortality, however it may shrink in turn from the sympathies of its kind, and though it would rather pour forth its sorrows to the winds than to its fellows, if it merits not equal thanks with those who make it their business to visit the sick and imprisoned, surely deserves not so harsh a name. Misanthropy should be made of sterner stuff.

I have been insensibly led to these remarks, I believe, by the way of propitiating my readers if they should discover in me a propensity to paint nature rather than the lords of creation, whose feelings, passions and history must ever be accounted the most interesting study of mankind, and the most moving theme of story.

It was morning in the vale of Agualta. I do not mean a New England morning, with a drizzling north-easter ; nor a Canadian morning, with the air filled with invisible razors ; nor a Carolinian one, with fever and ague rising in their dingy shrouds, from fen and morass, to seek whom they may devour ; nor yet an English morning, where the blessed sun has to breakfast upon some hundred thousand tons of fog before he can show his face ; but a genuine West Indian morn, where the light bursts forth, now and vivid as at the first unsealing of its fountain, and the whole field of view, from the mountain's tapering top to the transparent sea, seems as if it had literally slept, and was now waking to fresh life. On such a morning I set out on horseback, to explore the vale of Agualta, which lay a few miles from my residence.

Contrary to the custom of the country, and to the great scandal of my friends, I seldom took a servant with me on my journeys of discovery. A West Indian never thinks of walking a mile, nor of riding that distance without a runner at his horse's heels. But I was al-

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328 "Art, glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair." Lord Byron (1788-1824), *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (Canto II: LXXXVII).

ways headstrong. I even thought of introducing the good old New England custom of rambling into the woods on foot, as had been my wont, during my days of tutelage, in the land of Roger Williams ;[329] but the genius of the country came near taking a signal revenge for my presumptuous attempts at innovation. It was thus :—On the morning after my arrival at Water Valley,[330] I broke away like a newly caught Cherokee,[331] and got a mile and a half into the woods before I thought whether it would do or not. But my doubts on the subject were soon resolved ; for, on turning round a huge cotton tree, I was confronted by a gigantic negro, armed with a cutlass.

"Make bow for macaroni, massa," said he, making a profound salaam, but looking confoundedly saucy. "Me make bow for macaroni, massa," he repeated, before my fright allowed me to guess at his meaning. But the extended palm on the highway or in a dark wood conveys but one idea the world over ; so I dropped a piece of money into it in a hurry.

"Thankee, massa," said he, seizing my hand and kissing it, which I endured about as comfortably, as if the same ceremony had been performed by a tiger.

To my shame I confess that I snatched away my hand and bolted ; and stopped not till I dropped down by the old windmill of Water Valley, a tired and a wiser man. And never did I venture forth again, without having in my pocket an argument that would be more than a *quid pro quo* for dirk or cutlass. But not having had, as yet, any evil experiences in my equestrian expeditions, I concluded that the genius of the isle, thinking me sufficiently punished by my late fright, was willing to come to a truce, and meet me half way ; I giving up walking, and he the negro *courant*. Alone, then, and at sunrise, I found myself on one of the most remarkable points of this ro-

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329 Roger Williams (c.1603–1683) was the founder of Rhode Island. Banished by the General Court of Massachusetts because of his criticism of local religious authorities, he founded Providence on the Narragansett Bay in 1636.

330 A village, situated northeast of Agualta Vale, Jamaica, in the same parish.

331 The largest Native American people settled in the southern Appalachian Mounts, until removed to the Indian Territory in the 1830s. In 1827s, they adopted a constitution which established themselves as a democratic Nation. Thanks to Sequoyah's invention of a Cherokee phonetic alphabet in 1821, they were able to keep tribal records and publish newspapers. When gold was discovered on their territory in 1830, the pressure of greedy white settlers forced them to yield their land, which resulted, in 1838, in their deportation to the Indian Territory (Oklahoma), during which thousands of them died along the tragic "Trail of Tears."

tund ball. The reader must imagine a peak of the Blue Mountains[332] (Jamaica) rising to a rounded top, and then by an earthquake's power, split into three distinct summits, (for so says tradition of the case in hand,) each standing in one of the angles of an equilateral triangle, and inclosing between them the valley in question. To see it as it is, blooming and verdant, one is tempted to believe that it had been always thus, but in some unknown way locked from the knowledge of men ; and, that at some mysterious 'Open Sesame,' and with the quickness of that magical scene in Cherry and Fair Star,[333] when the blighted grove is clothed instantaneously with flowers and fruit, the mountain's barren breast had been sundered, and the paradise it held revealed. But here doubtless was a scene of hideous ruin, which the hand of time, that softener of the rough ways of the earth, and redeemer of provinces from the empire of the great deep, has gradually smoothed over, till, at length, it is filled with all that is rare and delicious in this wonderful climate. All around it the land rises to the height of one thousand feet, and is clothed with gigantic trees, using, like the walls of an amphitheatre, column upon column, with their green capitals, and hung by the whole family of vines with festoons and streamers. There is a single notch in the hills upon the north-east, which seems to have been purposely left open to admit the earliest beam of the sun, or to give its inhabitants a bird's-eye view of the glorious sea, or that the trade wind, that rover of the deep, might have free course to enter and revel in its bowers. If it were stripped of its foliage, I should pronounce it the crater of an extinguished volcano ; and the opening at the north, the ancient channel of the lava. But there is not a trace of subterranean fire in this part of the island, and the tradition of its formation, as above described, in the earthquake which destroyed Port Royal,[334] is sufficiently authentic.

I had ascended the mountain in a very tedious serpentine upon its northern face, and after pausing a moment in the gap to admire the beautiful stream which conveyed off the superfluous waters of the place, and here leaps down the precipice in an unbroken column

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332 Blue Mountain Peak is the highest point in Jamaica at some 7400 feet.

333 *Cherry and Fair Star*; or, *The Children of Cyprus; A Grand Asiatic Melodramatic Romance in 2 Acts* : a play by an anonymous author, first performed on 8 April 1822 in the Royal Theatre in Covent Garden, London.

334 An English city situated on a peninsula in Kingston Bay and destroyed in 1692 by an earthquake and the ensuing tidal wave.

of three hundred feet, I spurred my steed, and plunged at once amid the bowers of this green house of the topics. At length, after following the rivulet about a mile, I threw myself upon its bank to rest, and to survey more leisurely the objects near me. There was an endless variety of trees and plants rarely seen in the lower regions. There were birds of the gayest plumage, in the trees. The water literally forced its way through vines and flowers, and played upon ruddy pebbles, which, had they been rubies, could not have made it sparkle more brightly, or chime more melodiously. The most delicious sensation stole over me. The Arcadian[335] shades of classic Greece rose upon my memory and nothing was wanting to complete the enchantment but the presence of the guardian spirit—some Dryad,[336] such as a poet might have dreamed of in my situation.

Something here frighted my horse. I rose quickly and saw hard by, under a mountain cedar, a figure which, had it not been tall, and erect as the tree by which it stood, I should certainly have pronounced the incarnation of Old Age. A large palm leaf hat covered his head, from which long gray locks fell to his shoulder and breast, and mingled there with a most majestic beard. The expression of his eye was singularly unearthly—calm, yet full of the interest with which a superior being may be supposed to regard the children of mortality. Had I met him on ruinous Hecla,[337] by the Nile, or amid the upper solitudes of the Cordilleras, I should have paid him my obeisance at once as the *genius loci*. As it was, methought he was hugely out of place. He advanced towards me with a benignant smile as if he read my thoughts.

"You are surprised," he said, in a voice of great melody, and slightly marked with a foreign accent, "to see one like me—the ruins of your race—in these green solitudes, where nothing fades but him who makes his boast of immortality."

Notwithstanding his solemnity, my romance still kept uppermost. "After being ushered into such a paradise," I replied, "I was prepared for anything in the shape of nymph or fairy ; but not, I confess, for an apparition altogether as venerable as yourself."

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335 A region of ancient Greece, surrounded by mountains, in which people lived a proverbially simple and pastoral life.

336 A nymph of the forest.

337 Mount Hekla, a very active volcano in Iceland. Its most famous eruption dates back to 1766. It was believed to be one of the gates to purgatory.

"I have lived in these valleys ten years, young man," said he, "and am not altogether so old or helpless as you imagine ; but sorrow," he continued, "whitens the locks unto death's harvest, as rapidly as that sun the fields to the reaper's hand."

In such conversation I walked on by the side of my singular companion a few rods further up the beautiful steam, till rising a little hill we came at once upon a neatly thatched cottage, so closely embowered that it could not be seen till one was almost actually entering it. It was so situated, however, that when, at the old gentleman's invitation, I had entered and taken a seat in its little verandah, I could look through 'the notch' and see far, far away, hovering like a spirit on the utmost verge of the earth, a solitary white sail ; but it soon flitted past, like a white cloud before the night glass of the astronomer.

"And is it possible that you live here alone ?" said I after taking a rapid survey of the premises.

"Not entirely," said he ; "do you not hear the sounds from that tree ?"

On a large bread-nut tree before the house were hundreds of birds, hopping from branch to branch, and tilling the sun with music. They were the most singularly beautiful creatures imaginable ; somewhat larger than a Canary bird, of the most glossy black, with a bright red eye set in the centre of a white circle, like a ruby in a pearl ring.

"They are the Barbadoes blackbird."[338] said the old gentleman ; "they always settle in colonies upon a single tree. They prefer the bread-nut tree, and at this moment there are more than one hundred nests on the one before you. They have a prior right to the soil, for they settled here before me, and no consideration would induce me to cut down that tree."

"It is natural," said I, "that in your loneliness you should become attached to beast and bird, and even to particular plants and trees."

"It is true," said he, "and well is it for man that it is so—and yet I am not quite alone."

He rose as he spoke, and passing under the magnificent awning of the palms, cedars and tamarinds, in the rear of the house

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338 A member of the *Icteridae* family also known as the Carib Grackle, this indigenous bird is extremely gregarious when roosting.

brought me to a clearing of several acres. Here were all kinds of garden vegetables, rare fruits, and flowers and some hundred thrifty coffee plants. A sturdy fellow, with a dark Portuguese looking countenance, was busily engaged in clearing up a thick growth of young trees that skirted the little plantation.

"Here is the proof," said he, "that my friend Sancho, at least, is no common hermit, for he lives by the sweat of his brow. Poor fellow ! he has ate my bread in prosperity, and will not leave his old master now that the cloud is on him, so I encourage him to cultivate this tract to keep him contented and happy ! He labors all the week, and with his wife goes to market on Sunday."

"But why," said I, "does he now and then leave a lank sapling standing ?"

"These are coffee trees," said he, "that the wood has grown up and choked. All the plants I have were in this way rescued from the dominion of the forest, and thousands more are still buried in that thicket."

"Then this spot has been inhabited before," said I.

"Yes doubtless there have been hermits here before me," replied he, smiling as he used the term ; "but where are they now ?" he continued, and a change passed over his countenance, "and how shortly may the same question be asked as fruitlessly, when some future invader of the wilderness shall discover here the plantations of Vincent Velasques !"

We took another path and were once more near the rivulet, when I thought I heard a guitar. I listened —it was no illusion, and now there was a very rich voice accompanying it. My "Arcadia" again got the ascendancy. "Ah, here is at last the *genia loci*," thought I, almost aloud, as on advancing a few steps further, I discovered in the musician a beautiful female. But instead of being equipped like a woodnymph, she sat by the stream, singing with an upward cast of countenance almost divine, what I now recognized as a Spanish hymn to the Virgin. My romance vanished. I could have kneeled to her as the Catholic bows to Madonna, but not as to a heathen goddess. The old gentleman visibly enjoyed my surprise, but soon advanced and introduced me :—"My daughter Angelica," said he ; and never did I bow to one of the sex with deeper homage ; for never was the purity of heaven in the soul more clearly reflected than from her calm black

eye, nothing could be more beautifully majestic, and at the same time more sweetly feminine, than the bend of the head and the air with which she received my salutation.

"You have now seen us all," said the old gentleman, "save Sancho's wife, who may not care to be visible, and a mule or two."

Time sped amazingly. I had spent the day—had dined with them, my astonishment increasing momentarily at the polished sense and occasional bursts of melancholy pathos that marked the conversation of the father, and my senses sufficiently bewildered with the surpassing loveliness of the daughter,—and it was time for me to depart.

"We see but little company," said Velasques, as I took my leave, "but the Hermit of Agualta will always be happy to welcome you to his solitude."

How vastly more powerful an interest is attached to man than to any other object on this globe of ours. I passed on my way without heeding tree or flower, my thought intent on Velasques and his daughter. Nature's aristocracy was written on their brows, and there was that about them that was redolent of other times. "There is evidently a tale to be told," concluded I, as I emerged from the valley, and became aware that one of the most splendid sunsets of this land of light was deluging the broad west with its glories.

The old man's invitation was not disregarded. I soon became intimate at the valley. One day, as we were sitting alone at a little distance from the house, after I had entertained him for some time with speculations on the virtues of solitude like those at the commencement of this article, which he received with an incredulous smile, Velasques spoke as follow :

"You are wrong—you are wrong, my young friend, at least, so far as you think that contemplation alone can furnish proper aliment for the mind. It may do for a while ; it is a most exquisite dessert after the mind has reaped the substantial of its existence, 'mid the stir and shock of men ;'[339] but continue it alone, and the ever craving spirit, for want of that commerce with its fellows which seems essential to its healthful existence, will turn inwardly, and, with an unnatural appetite prey upon itself. It may also be taken as an anodyne for

339 "But 'midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men, / To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess, / And roam along, the world's tired denizen, / With none who bless us, none whom we can bless." Lord Byron (1788-1824), *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (Canto ii. Stanza 26).

light sorrow—that sorrow which agitates the surface of the deep within us, but does not pervade, poison and whirl it up from the bottom ; it can no more affect the case of this last, than can the constant flow of Jordan, or the visitings of the winds of Palestine heal that putrid lake which covers Sodom.[340] Hear the experience of a man whose heart was crushed in the world, and who fled hither for relief and has been disappointed. My father was descended from an ancient and wealthy family in Andalusia,[341] but being a younger son, and having a rapacious elder brother, when he came to his majority he found himself comparatively destitute. But his was the true spirit of independence—a spirit that would win him a fortune where others would starve. Discarding the prejudices common to patrician families, he went to Cadiz[342] and engaged in trade and finally died at a good old age, leaving me, his only son, a wild youth of twenty-four, with an estate little inferior to the proud heritage of the family at Cordova.[343] But there are those who seem born under an evil star—whom misfortune follows like a blood-hound through the race of life —whose only escape is in the grave. Is it destiny ? or how shall we account for it, that the heavens should rain blessings continual and unmingled upon one, while a malison,[344] a mildew, blasts the efforts of another in the bud, or lets them ripen only to be swept with the whirlwind. Is it chance ? Chance never made this beautiful earth—beautiful at times even to my eyes, to whom it has yielded nought but thorns and poisons—nor does it govern it. Eternity shall explain all. "At one fell swoop,"[345] all my possessions were swept from me, and a price set upon my head, for some suspicion of being concerned in fanning the embers of liberty, which have periodically burst forth in a flame, in my native province. The son of my father's brother was my principal accuser, and, no doubt, shared in the spoil. But my spir-

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340 The Dead Sea, in the depths of which Sodom and Gomorrah are supposedly engulfed.

341 Spain's largest region, situated by the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the Strait of Gibraltar. It was ruled by the Moors until most of it was reconquered by the kings of Castile in the 13th century. The kingdom of Granada became Christian in 1492.

342 A city in Andalusia, a major port for Spanish commerce with the New World in the 18th and early 19th century.

343 Another Andalusian city. In 1492, Columbus received permission to sail to the "Indies" by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in the Alcazar ("fortress") of Cordoba. The city was sacked by the French during the Spanish campaign (1808-1812).

344 An old word for "malediction" or "curse."

345 "What, all my pretty chickens and their dam / At one fell swoop?" William Shakespeare (1564-1616), *Macbeth* (Act 4, Scene III).

it then was elastic as that tall bamboo by the stream. The hurricane at whose presence I have seen it bowed even to the earth, is no sooner passed than it springs erect as ever, shorn, it may be of some of its feathery branches, but the sap which they consumed shoots upward, and the plant is stronger for the pruning. Even so, in a week after the catastrophe, and with a very few thousand dollars, I embarked at Lisbon for the British islands, the gayest of a large company of emigrants. We cast anchor at nightfall near the east end of Jamaica to wait a pilot. But at daybreak I found myself upon the beach a shipwrecked and pennyless man. A squall of an hour had dashed our brave bark on a coral rock, and to escape with life was all that was permitted us. This was a rude blast for the poor bamboo,—nevertheless, it rose.

I recollected that a branch of my mother's family had long been established in Kingston.[346] Thither I travelled on foot—enquired out my relative, and exhibited such evidence as convinced him of our relationship. John Montovio was rich ; he was more—one of the most benevolent of men. I was put into his counting house, won his confidence by my integrity and perseverance ;—in two years was a partner in the business with his son ; in two more the husband of his only daughter, and in ten the father of three lovely girls. In this time my father and benefactor died, and I was as rich as I could well desire. I sickened of the monotony and slavery of business. I had heard of happiness in a cottage, and from the hot brick walls and dusty streets of Kingston, I retired to a beautiful little seat which I had at the foot of the Liguanea mountains.[347] The picturesque country around was thickly sprinkled with similar establishments. The circumstance of my foreign birth had been no bar to the sympathies of the open-hearted English, and here for six months I tasted almost to an intoxication of happiness, the inestimable blessing of "wife, children and friends." Blessed Triad of the heart ! well may ye be toasted forever by all who have the least perception of your meaning. My wife was all I could wish her—the most feminine of her sex ; and though she possessed to excess some of the amiable weaknesses of woman, I would not have had them exchanged for a strength of mind that would have made even her thoughts independent of mine, for the

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346 Jamaica's capital founded in 1693 by the British.

347 In the Liguanea Plain, a broad alluvial plain overhung by the Blue Mountains.

world. I always detested the character of the English Elizabeth.[348] I never could love a woman tinged with anything masculine. I would as soon have taken a bearded man to my arms as a blue or a termagant. But here it was that I became fatally convinced of a woful error of which rich people generally, and West Indians more particularly, are guilty, in trusting their children to improper nurses. The nursery maid with us is invariably an African, and without the utmost vigilance of the mother, before your children are six years of age they will be the veriest little heathens extant. Ghosts, witches, the whole generation of African devils, and, worst and blackest on the list, their infernal Obi,[349] will be as much matters of belief as any article of religion taught them by their mother. My wife had been bred up in the same way. She was familiar with all the superstitions of the negroes, and perhaps was on that account less guarded than a stranger to their ways would have been. For myself, I will confess, that by a mistake too common in this country, I considered the business of instruction more appropriately the mother's province, and seldom meddled with her charge further than to caress or romp with the dear creatures. When therefore by the merest accident I discovered to what extent and depth their tender minds were imbued with these horrid superstitions, I own to you that I was frightened and enraged beyond measure.

I was sitting in the back verandah of my house one bright, starry evening, with Anna Maria, my second girl, then in her fourth year standing between my knees, swinging herself to and fro, and prattling in her sweet, laughing way, and ever and anon throwing back her curls to catch my eye, or to ask some question, when suddenly there appeared a bright light moving among the plantain trees of the negro hamlet. The child crept close to me, with every symptom of terror and whispered—"Congo Jane is flying to-night, but Anna Maria has been good, 'pa."

"Congo Jane !" said I,

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348 Elizabeth I, Queen of England and Ireland (1558-1603), known as "the Virgin Queen" because she never married; she reigned for 45 years, showing a high sense of her responsibilities; the Spanish Velasques may also harbor some chauvinistic grudge for Spain was England's enemy and the Invincible Armada was defeated under her reign in 1588.

349 A form of sorcery, sometimes confused with voodoo, inherited from the Ashanti (Ghana) tradition and widespread among the slave community in the West Indies.

"Yes 'pa—see the fire that she makes come out of her temples to burn bad people ; but I have always been good to Congo Jane."

I was astonished ; and by a few questions found her knowledge of negro witchcraft far greater than I could have imagined, and what was worse, that she believed it. "Nurse had told her so, and nurse had said that Congo Jane would burn people that were not good to her." Thus it seemed that a regular system of propitiatory offering had been instituted to the shrine of this female Moloch ;[350] the nurse, who acted as priestess, doubtless coming in for a large share of fees.

Congo Jane was a superannuated black who had been for a great number of years a fixture on the estate. She was tall, gray headed, one eyed, and a reputed witch ; and altogether, with her long walking stick, and mouth constantly in motion, she was as sinister looking an object as you would care to behold. Her Obi was accounted the most potent in the parish, and many a dark legend was extant among the negroes, of her having employed it successfully against human life. But I never dreamed that these ridiculous stories would gain credit among any but the negroes. I even thought Jane's Obi might be an excellent thing to keep the rogues in subjection ; and with true West Indian indifference, hardly bestowed a second thought upon the subject, further than occasionally to jeer the old beldame on her art, or to threaten in jest some refractory slave with it. She was proud of the consideration which it gained her among the negroes and said to have kept, as a symbol of her trade, a calabash filled with grave dirt and parrot's feathers, and covered with mystic characters, suspended before her hut. It was also a source of revenue to her, for she was constantly receiving presents from those who were desirous of purchasing her good will, or rather neutrality. But she broke her chain when she presumed to levy contribution on my family. I ordered her to be bound hand and foot, laid on a mule, and carried to the provision grounds five miles up the mountain, and threatened her with 'a nine and thirty'[351] if ever she appeared at 'Mountain foot' again. The nursery maid degraded to the kitchen, first giving her a nine and thirty, and threatened her with 'the field'[352] if ever she tampered with the children more. But there is venom enough in a toad to kill a man.

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350 The god of the Canaanites and Phoenicians to whom children were sacrificed.

351 A penalty of nine and thirty lashes, according to the slave code.

352 Living and work conditions were considerably more painful for slaves who worked in the fields than for those who were used for domestic tasks.

Business called me to Kingston. In two days a frighted slave rushed into my presence with the news that Congo Jane had set Obi for the children. Notwithstanding what I had previously seen and heard, I was inclined to treat the matter lightly.

"Well," said I, "has it killed them ?"

"They sick, sir," said the fellow, "and Misses she there sick too, sir."

I was thunder struck, and had my horse saddled immediately. Convinced that there was something more in this than the idle fears of the slave wot of, I took with me a medical friend and my brother-in-law. It was late in the day when we arrived. On one of the forbidden fruit trees before the house was a calabash with all the usual paraphernalia of Obi, grave dirt, birds' heads and feathers, and marked with three coffins. None of the slaves had dared to touch it. We entered the house. It was filled with the wailings of pain. My wife and the two children (Angelica was then an infant) were in their beds, with every indication of the most violent illness. My wife was able to state as follows :—The children had been the first to discover the accursed Obi, early that morning. Their terror almost amounted to fits ; and she was herself greatly agitated. She succeeded, however, in soothing them sufficiently to eat some rice broth for their dinner, which the cook had made very nice. But all would not do ; from being frighted they became sick, and were now as I saw them. The doctor here examined their pulses very carefully.

"When was this Obi set ?" he enquired.

"Last night, sir," said one of the domestics.

"Rapid work this, for Obi," said he, in a perfectly calm voice ; "come, is there any of this rice left ?"

"There is my dish on the table with the spoon in it," said poor little Anna Maria, by whose bed he was standing, "the Obeah spoiled it ; I did not love it."

The doctor looked in the dish a moment, and then held up the spoon. Horror of horrors ! the silver was black. "Poisoned ! Poisoned !" was the searing thought that flashed upon me, and might have been my exclamation, but I recollected nothing distinctly of those dreadful moments, only that when I recovered my senses there were three corpses in my house.

* * * Congo Jane could not be found ; but as it was said that she had a son who was chief of a gang of runaways that infested a neighboring district, it is probable that she found an asylum among them.

The quondam nursery maid confessed, after condemnation, that she had persuaded the old hag to set the Obi to further her own schemes of vengeance ; supposing in her ignorance that all accidents would inevitably be laid at the witch's door. But she gave too strong a dose, and———I watched the pile when she suffered till she was burned to a cinder. * *

Well, then followed a confused space of time—how long I know not, only my Angelica had become a tall girl—taller than Anna Maria—but she had not her look. I left her with her uncle and fled from Kingston. There were so many black faces there—every one seemed a gibbering fiend, sent from the pit of darkness to make faces at me. Travelling northward, I found this spot—bought the whole—and wo to the African who ventures to cross me here.

His tone had sunk to an unnatural depth, and his eye shone with the burning thought of his wrongs. It affected me unpleasantly, but he soon dropped his face upon his knee, and, in a few moments lifted it again, calm and sedate as usual.

"And you have not then found in solitude the desired relief."

"Relief !" echoed he, with a sad smile, "can you point me to a plant in all this wilderness that can cure sorrow. My disease has been only changed by coming hither. When I fled society it was a raging fever, now it is a consumption ; slow, but no less sure. No, mind is not thus the slave of matter. Immortal is its nature—so are its hopes ; from immortality then must come its consolations. No, it is nature—barren, dreary nature, that is healed and beautified by the healthful, life-giving touch of mind. It is mind that casts its shadow on each thing it passes. It is mind that colors the glass through which we look at nature, as well as at futurity. This rotund ball is nothing. The earth is dirt. Man makes the world and gives each spot its character—the hills, the fields, the woods and streams, the blushing flowers—the sparkling sky, their tints of loveliness. This same earth and heaven, therefore, which to your undimmed eye may be clad in flowers and gilded with sunbeams, to me is but strewed with ashes and hung with sackcloth. But blessed be God, from eternity there gleams a ray

through this curtain of the dark, which does more to cheer my darkness than all the suns of the firmament. It has written upon my heart, as with a sunbeam, that the ways of God are righteous though inscrutable, and that in the light of that eternal day whence it emanates, all shall be revealed and justified. It is mystery but wisdom all. The same sun which turns yonder plain to dust, draws up the shower to the mountain, and the hand that dug the grave of Port Royal deep in the sea, has opened an asylum for Vincent Velasques."

He rose with a serene and elevated air, and made a motion to go. But some points of his tale still seemed a little in the mist.

"Angelica, you say, was left in Kingston."

"Yes," said he ; "but my brother has brought her to me every summer to spend a few weeks, and for the last two years, the dear girl, at her own entreaty, has been with me constantly. Sancho, my old faithful servant, the companion of all my fortunes, seemed so essentially a part of myself that I forgot to give him a separate chapter."

"But Angelica," interrupted I——

"Well, what of her ? Is she not good ?"

"Too good," replied I, with an uncomfortable sensation in my throat, "to be left alone in this island."

"I understand you," said he—"The old man must soon sleep—not, alas, with his fathers—but it matters not—it will be no less sound ; but Angelica is provided for !"

Now I had not a doubt that at Velasques's death, his daughter would return to her mother's brother. But then it did not seem to me exactly the thing. Something more I thought was necessary to her happiness.

"Angelica is provided for," quoth the old man, and dashing his hand across his brow, he walked away. It was well perhaps, that he did so ; for I know not what folly I might have uttered next. Sundry reminiscences of the sea also came to my aid, suggesting unanswerable questions, such as what I meant ? &c. and I mounted my horse and departed. Business having called me to another part of the island, it was several weeks before I re-visited the Hermit's plantation. Something unusual was evidently in progress, for a number of superb horses were tied under the trees near the house, and on approaching nearer I saw a group of persons of both sexes gathered

round an open grave, their heads bowed in sorrow or devotion, while a priest read the affecting service for the repose of the departed. Nearest the priest stood the weeping Angelica leaning on the arm of the handsomest youth I had ever seen. I understood the scene at a glance. Vincent Velasques was no more—this was his grave—but who was *the stranger ?* The grave was filled—'the last deep prayer' of the ritual read, and, after the Catholic fashion, the symbol of our immortal hopes was planted in place of a headstone. The Youth lifted the weeping girl upon a ready saddled steed—the whole group mounted and moved slowly away. "A Dios," murmured Angelica as she passed me, and I saw her no more. The form of Sancho still sat near the grave. "Do you not go too, Sancho ?"

"No," said he—"master gave me these lands, and I shall live and die here." "But who was *he*, Sancho ?"

"He ? young Signor Montovio—my young mistress's cousin — her husband that is to be."

"Oh now I understand," thought I—and departed feeling less wise than was my wont. And I never visited the vale of Agualta afterwards.

THE

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Incidents in the Life of a Quiet Man.

I Went to College with but one very decided aversion—the smell of a sick room. With a sanguine temperament and high health, I had once been "laid up" for a winter with a lame knee, and the odors of a physician's appliances, never particularly agreeable, had become associated in my mind with confinement and pain and everything repulsive. I loved the open air with an eccentric affection. Sleeping under a tree, or encamping for the night in the shaft of a quarry, on my mineralizing excursion, were incidents I exulted in. To awake at any time and snuff the morning air gave me a thrill like a release from imprisonment. I lived out of doors.

Accident made me a nurse. My most intimate friend fell ill, and, with the caprice of a boy, would submit to no government but mine. I was under necessity of administering all his medicines, and watching with him, and performing for him the thousand kind offices which the sick demand. He lay in my room a month, and, one by one, I insensibly overcame my aversions. The smell of ether and the close air and the sight of disgusting medicines had become at least endurable. The day he got out, I was at a loss. Strange as it seemed to me, worn out, and weary, and impatient of it all as I had become, I wished, him back again, making the same nervous complaints, and calling upon me for the same recurring services, and querulously refusing every other watcher. From this time I have had an unhealthy passion for scenes of this description. Like all other passions, too, it has sated itself with one degree of misery after another, till now nothing satisfies it but the deepest—death or wild insanity—whatever tries the sufferer most, and demands in the spectator most of sympathy and nerve. I think my heart was never hard, and I am sure that, instead of becoming indifferent to distress, it grows more sensibly alive by every repetition to sympathy and pity—but there is an excitement in

the high-wrought circumstances which accompany sickness, which feeds in me a spring of curiosity, which I cannot but think, is one of the deepest seated cravings of my nature. Men are nowhere without disguise but in a sick room. The character is nowhere else so tried, the weaknesses so uncovered, the fine godlike under-traits, which it is the way of the world to cover and keep down—disinteredness and courage, and patience—nowhere else so irresistibly developed. I could never be deceived in a man I had nursed in sickness.

In a body of five or six hundred young men, many of them new to the climate, opportunities were not wanting to indulge such a passion to its extent, and I soon became a desirable attendant from my skill and knowledge of the offices so necessary to the patient. I learned a thousand little assiduities, and studied the slight but refreshing changes of position, and could dispose a pillow skilfully, and graduate the light pleasantly to the eye, and relieve, by many an unseen wile, the terrible monotony and weariness of disease. I had in my memory, too, stores of poetry and romance, and no one can tell, who has not been so attended, how grateful it is to a mind weary with feeding on itself and crowded upon with sickening images, to be stolen away by a winning narration to the land of faery, and have the self-sated sympathies diverted to the light and shadow of the beautiful changes in a tale. How often have I, by a touching story, drawn tears which I knew had in them more healing than medicine ! It is easy, for the heart is tender in sickness, and no one can tell how pleasant it is, for tears when the eyes are hot, and the brain iron-bound, as it seems to be, with the dryness of fever, exceed the freshness of water.

In the pursuit of such a passion, I have naturally met with many distressing scenes, not only in sick rooms, but in all places where human nature is brought into extremity. There is here and there one in my memory, the singularity of which may possibly excuse the painfulness of narration.

I sat one cold night in January, watching with a Senior who was insane. He was otherwise in perfect bodily health, but had been confined now a week with a periodical madness to which he was subject, and which was hereditary in his family. He was a man of powerful muscular frame, gentlemanly and full of spirit, and with the passionate gesture and the wild energy of expression in his dark eyes

and fine countenance when the fit was on him, he was the handsomest creature I ever looked upon.

It was two o'clock in the morning. The moon shone bright out of doors, and the late noises in the college rooms had all ceased, and the night was as still as death. I was reading the Book of the Martyrs.[353] The chapel clock startled me as it struck two, and I rose from a harrowing description of impalement, and walked to the window to collect my nerves. The clear, sparkling snow lay like fairy-work over the beautiful common, and the trees, laden with the feathery crystals, looked like motionless phantoms in the moonlight. I could see down into the town, and far along the streets on either side of the common, and there was not a figure to darken the white side-walks, and I listened till my ear was pained with silence, and could not hear even a dog's bark. I turned from the window with an undefined feeling of dread, and looking at my patient, replenished the fire, and sat down again to my book. I had read perhaps half a page, when he rose suddenly in the bed, and pushing the long hair from his eyes, looked at me steadily. I thought he was dreaming. His mouth had a fixed curl of hatred, and the whole expression of his face was terrible. I sat still and looked him fixedly in the eye. His fingers were working like a man's who is feeling for a weapon, and he was drawing his feet almost imperceptibly under him as if preparing for a spring. The unearthly fiendishness of his look at this moment is indescribable. The glare of the bright fire on his face, his tangled hair, his white night dress, and the utter malignity of his set teeth and frowning brows, might have shaken stronger nerves than mine. I was convinced that the least motion on my part would be followed by an instantaneous spring ; and in the hope of looking him down with the steadiness of my gaze, I sat as motionless as a statue with my eyes still fixed upon him. The three or four minutes thus occupied gave me time to collect myself. I was slender, and by no means remarkable for my personal activity, and in the event of a struggle I knew I stood but little chance. I thought of shouting for assistance, but even if I had been heard by the sound sleepers in the rooms about me, such noises are too common in college to excite anything but a curse on the rioter. I

353 John Fox (1516-1587), *The Actes and Monuments of These Latter and Perilous Dayes,* commonly known as the *Book of the Martyrs* (1563), relates the sufferings of the English Protestant martyrs under the reign of Mary Tudor (1496-1533).

thought I would speak to him. In a quiet and pleasant tone I called him by his name and asked him what he was going to do.

"Kill you !" was the brief answer.

"For what ?"

"Because," said he, speaking with his teeth shut as he rose upon one knee and grasped the pillow firmly, "I have found you alone, and I know you !"

The next moment he sprang into the middle of the floor, and with a stealthy and rapid tread like a tiger's, glided to the door and locked it. I did not move from my position, except to place my feet in an attitude to rise instantly. He approached slowly, putting down one foot firmly after the other as if to be certain that the floor was strong, until he stood close before me. The light-stand was between us holding two candles and the large quarto from which I had been reading. I still kept my eyes on him without moving a muscle and once or twice he quailed under my gaze, and looked aside. I was beginning to hope he would abandon his intention, when with a single motion of his arm, he swept away the stand, and sprang upon me. The violence of the shock overthrew me and we fell to the floor. His knees were upon my breast and his fingers at my throat in an instant. For a minute I struggled hard to throw him off, but with his powerful frame he sat as firmly as a rock, choking me nearly to strangulation with the closeness of his grasp. As a last hope I attempted to shout. Exhausted as I was, my feeble "help !" was scarce louder than a whisper and I felt my eyes flash and the blood crowd into my head with a terrible sense of suffocation. In the agony of the struggle I threw out my hand into the fire near which I had fallen, and, with an instinctive desperation, seized a handful of burning coals, and held them for a minute to his side. They burned through his night dress instantly and he sprang to his feet with a curse, leaving me on the floor with scarce the power to move a limb. The next moment the Tutor, who had been disturbed by the noise of my fall, entered the room, and with a singular habit of obedience, the madman slunk to his bed, and covering up his head lay as quiet as a child till morning.

It is the custom in some parts of New England to watch by the dead night and day till interment. I was once called upon for this service. A young girl whom I had known died in my neighborhood, and I was requested to sit up for the night in an adjoining room with two

female relatives of the deceased. It was my office to go into the room frequently where the corpse lay, and attend to the lights which were burning at the foot of the bed ; and with this occupation and reading aloud, the night passed without much weariness till twelve. About that time my companions, two stout country girls, fell asleep. I threw aside my book, and walked from one room to the other, looking out sometimes upon the night, and sometimes stopping to gaze on the ghastly features of the corpse. There was no moon, but the stars looked near and bright, and the absolute silence and the sweet spiciness of the air combined with the solemnity of my vigil in giving the night almost a supernatural beauty. I began to feel a kind of pleasure in the powerful contrast of the scene. I turned from the still and deathly face lying in its revolting fixedness before me, to look out upon the starry and living splendor of the night, and breathe the life-giving moisture of the wind, and inhale the delicious scents of the flowers ; and when the strange feeling of saturation and insufficiency which accompanies natural beauty came upon me, I returned, with a pleasure I could not understand, to peruse once more the rigid features of the corpse, and muse on the terrible nature of death.

It requires intense thought to believe death real. To look upon human lips formed and colored like our own, and wearing their familiar expression, and comprehend fully that they never will stir again—to gaze on eyelids, softly and naturally closed, and believe that they will never again lift from the eye—to peruse a forehead marked with character and thought, the hair parted on it as if with its own volition and taste, and know that the curious organs beneath it will never work more—these are convictions as difficult as they are painful to the mind, and such as are rarely attained by the ordinary gazers on the dead.

And it seems to me that it is not the pain of dying, nor the dread of corruption, nor any of the common horrors of death that make it most terrible. These are circumstances, fearful, it is true, but such as the courage of a strong heart may meet. But it is that nature will survive—that our friends will live on without us—that the stars will sparkle and revolve, and the flowers come in their seasons, and the ambitious and the pleasure-loving seek fame and pleasure—and not a star's ray be interrupted, nor a leaf fall, nor a human foot slacken in its pursuit because we are not with them. It is this leaving us behind

—this thrusting away and forgetting us, like broken instruments, that touches us. To me, at least, Death would lose half its terrors with this thought. If I could escape it in any way, my happiness would be tenfold. If my spirit would pass into a flower and consciously live on—if I could become a voice and speak my own name, at ever so distant periods, to my friends—even if an urn containing my ashes might lie in a familiar place, and be a pleasant ornament in the house of some one who had loved me, I should be more content. I love this world, and its scenes, and its people, too well to pass willingly away, I know not whither. The thought of a disembodied and spiritual life apart from the tangible objects I have grown to, and the delightful affections I have given and won, is, with all its mystery and beauty, delightful. I would live forever where I am, if it were mine to choose. There is not an evil except death that appalls or sickens me. The daylight, and the air, and the interchange of social life, and simple health, are blessings enough, and give me but these, and mankind as they are, and much as the world is abused, I will take it for my portion while it endures.

With such thoughts passing in my mind, I walked away from the corpse to a window in the adjoining room. It opened on a flower-garden, and with my mind excited to the highest pitch, I stood breathing the scented air, and gazing intently on the stars. A sudden noise from the room in which the body lay startled me. It seemed to me like the struggle of animals or the beating of wings. Totally unable as I was in the rapid reflection of the moment to imagine the cause, my courage half failed me. I was about waking my companions, who slept soundly in their chairs, when the thought of their probable fright and uselessness deterred me ; and summoning my resolution, I entered the room. Everything was as I left it, but the noise was still there. The corpse lay unmoved, and the candles burnt clear ; and though the noise was loud, in the confusion of my senses I stood doubting from what quarter it came. It grew louder, and my hair seemed absolutely to creep. Still louder—and then a plunge—and the fire-board was dashed down, and a large white cat sprang into the room, and was on the corpse in an instant. I had heard of the demoniacal appetite these animals have for the flesh of the dead, but though it flashed upon me immediately, it was a minute at least before I had sufficient strength to move. She had buried her claws

deeply in the cheek and breast, and her white face was smeared with the blood when I seized her. She did not seem to be aware of my approach, and I had grasped her round the throat with both my hands before she took the least notice of me. Her claws were fastened in the sheet, and fearing to pull her off too roughly, I tried to choke her on the spot. The moment my fingers tightened, she sprang out of my hands with a suddenness for which I was not at all prepared, and flew into my face with the fury of a hyena. I succeeded after some struggling in seizing her again, and throwing her to the floor. I held her down with my feet till she strangled. A wild beast could not have shown a more desperate ferocity. My two fellow watchers, strangely enough, slept through it all. I went to the well, without waking them, and washed the blood from my hands, and composing the sheet as decently as I could over the desecrated body, I resumed my walk and my excited thoughts till morning.

I once had a friend who could never sleep at the full of the moon. If it was a clear night, he would draw the shutters, and stop every crevice in the windows to exclude the light, and pace the floor with a most troubled face till daylight. Sometimes it would seem too much to bear, and he would go out and ride furiously for hours, or row his skiff over the lake as if his life depended on his swiftness. While we were students together, I once made a Christmas visit with him at his father's, a wealthy landholder on one of the Western Lakes.[354] The full of the moon came round, and it was as cold as midwinter. It was fine sleighing, but the broad waters about us had frozen completely over since the fall of the snow, and had been safely crossed by adventurous passengers.

As I lay one night, wakeful with some uneasy thoughts, I heard my friend's voice in the next room, talking passionately with himself. A moment after, he came muttering into my chamber, and, evidently supposing me asleep, took down his skates which hung in the closet, and left the house. I dressed myself hastily, and took my own skates, and, descending to the shore-edge, found him as I expected, upon the ice. He turned his head as I stopped, but, accustomed to my presence at such times, he did not speak. As I fastened the last buckle around my ankle, he sprang upon his feet, and with the long safety rod in his hand (carried always in that part of the country as a secur-

354 A mountainous region of Maine with many lakes, including Sebago and Rangeley Lakes.

ity against the holes in the ice) he shot away down the lake like the wind. We were both tall men and excellent skaters. The ice had frozen in a dead cairn, and was without a flaw for miles along the shore, and with a strong westerly breeze directly in our backs, we skimmed it like birds. For the first mile or two I was occupied with the simple exhilaration of the exercise. The extreme polish of the ice sent us forward with very slight exertion at great speed, and it seemed to me as if we shot over the long shadows from the shore with a superhuman swiftness. We kept down, following the curve of the bank, where the water, from the shelter of the land, had frozen smoothest, till I saw by some marks familiar to me that we were ten miles from home. Still my companion led on. His strength seemed unabated, and leaning forward eagerly he threw out his limbs in long and powerful strides, speaking not a word, nor even turning his head when we passed, as we did occasionally, the glare of a hunter's fire. I began to grow fatigued, but at the same time my interest in the adventure assumed a wildness which I tried in vain to shake off. The extreme rapidity of our motion, the dim haze of the moonlight, the partial distinctness of the naked trees on shore, and, when we crossed a longer shadow than usual, the transparency of the ice, reflecting every star as distinctly as a mirror far beneath us, all combined with the knowledge that I was following one who was wild with a mysterious fear, in exciting and bewildering my imagination. I could not speak to him. My heart rose in my throat at the effort. Another hour we skated on before the wind in silence. My limbs began to grow stiff, and obeyed mechanically and painfully the impulse of motion. Hill after hill went by, and I began to see more rarely the objects with which I had become familiar in my Summer excursions. We were getting beyond the point of my most adventurous voyages. The shore grew bolder and wilder and the fires of the hunters occurred more rarely, and still my companion's speed was unslackened. With my greatest efforts I could not overtake him. He was a better skater than I, and, with an instinctive quickness, he instantly apprehended my intention, and sprang on with increased velocity at the attempt. My eyes began to grow dizzy. I have an indistinct remembrance of skating on and on, long after I ceased to feel or notice anything but the necessity for following the figure before me, and I remember nothing more till I was awakened by a rough shake in broad daylight.

The embers of a large fire were glowing round a stump near me, my friend lay soundlessly asleep with his head across my body, and through a break in the trees I could see the broad icy bosom of the Lake stretching away in the clear light of the morning with a look of almost interminable distance to the opposite shore. It was with some difficulty that I could stir. With the help of the hospitable hunter who had granted my friend's request for a shelter by his fire, I gained my feet, and after a walk of three or four miles to a farm house, procured a sleigh, with which, after a cold drive of forty miles we reached home at noon.

THE

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THE CRAZY EYE.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your *philosophy*."[355]

IT is certain that many opinions, long since discarded by the learned world have still continued to keep that hold of the minds of the vulgar, those, for instance, connected with witchcraft, lucky and unlucky days, judicial astrology, and the like. Perhaps no stronger evidence could be adduced, to prove that there exists, in the mind of man, a principle of delight in all that is dark, mysterious, and terrible, —whose tendency is to give to the fictions of the imagination the power and reality of truth,—a principle which may be considered the source of all superstition, and from whose effects only the considered exercise of the highest powers of reflection can enable us to escape. Whether there be not danger in wholly disregarding the dictates of this feeling, and in listening altogether to the conclusions of a partially enlightened reason, is a question deserving of careful consideration. A wise man who takes in view our acknowledged ignorance of the efficient causes of a thousand operations which are hourly going on around us,—who reflects that even those maxims which we term *general laws*, are merely deductions from a limited number of facts, and may be superseded, at any time, by more extensive observations, will hesitate in pronouncing decisively on the absurdity of any belief, however inconsistent with his own preconceived notions.

These remarks may serve to dissipate some of the suspicion with which the following narration will naturally be received. It concerns a persuasion current, as far as I know, among the multitude in all ages and nations, and which, though often ridiculed, has found supporters even in men of reflecting and cultivated minds. I refer to the

[355] William Shakespeare (1564-1616), *Hamlet* (Act 1, scene V).

power which certain individuals are supposed to have of affecting *others* through the medium of the *eye* ; I do not mean, of course, the effect of strong passion or feeling, speaking in the bright orbs of a beautiful woman, or in the dilated and flashing pupils of an angry man ; this has never been denied. The power of which I write seems to reside in the organ itself, and to be arbitrarily bestowed, like genius or ventriloquism, on a few individuals. The superstition of the evil eye is common to every barbarous people. That certain persons, generally sorcerers or old women, are able by a look to blast the fortune, or wither the bodily vigor of their unhappy victims, is believed as firmly and implicitly under the burning sun of Congo, as on the frozen plains of Kamschatka or in the pleasant islands of the Pacific. Among the Romans of the most enlightened period expiatory sacrifices were appointed for those who had felt the influence of a "malign eye," (*malus oculus*,) and we learn from the interesting accounts of Browne[356] that the primitive inhabitants of the Canaries are sufferers under the same apprehension.

The following anecdote, however, refers to an influence of a different cast. It is firmly believed, in many parts of Great Britain, especially the north,[357] that there are men who possess the ability of mastering and rendering powerless the most ungovernable of the insane, in the highest of their frenzy, by the sole efficacy of a *look*. It is indeed often asserted that no maniac can support the direct and steady regard of a sane man,—an idea which was sufficiently refuted by testimony of many respectable keepers of mad-houses, who have found the success of the experiment exceedingly precarious. The life of one in the western part of Pennsylvania had nearly fallen a forfeit to a rash attempt to subdue, by this means alone, the violence of a patient. But in those of whom I speak the influence seems to be of a peculiar character, and is remarked never to fail of effect. The following instance of successful application was received from an Eng-

356 Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682), an English writer and physician, learned in various fields such as religion, science and the esoteric, the author of *Religio Medici* (1642) in which he tried to reconcile science and religion.

357 Although the technique invented by Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) was largely ridiculed in the medical circles of the early 19th century, a few physicians, like John Elliotson (1791-1868), continued to support the Austrian physician's theories, even if they cost him his professorship at the London University. Modern hypnotism was the result of a chance discovery by the Scottish eye doctor, James Braid (1795-1860) who coined the term. However, even if Braid was a specialist of the eye, the author's allusion to the north of Great Britain may be purely accidental since Braid began to be involved in hypnotism only in the 1840s.

lish gentleman of undoubted veracity, and an eye-witness of most that he related. As the incident took place within the last fifteen years, it has been thought advisable to suppress the names of the parties.

A gentleman of family and fortune, in the west of England, by name Charles W——, had paid his addresses to the beautiful Miss P. youngest daughter (sic) of the Earl of H——, and had been favorably received. It was well known to the friends of Mr. W., of whom my informant was one, that his hopes of happiness were centered in the prospect of their approaching union, in which his affections were wholly engaged. No one who was acquainted with the amiable character of his bride, and the fairness of his worldly prospects, would have considered his expectations of future and lasting enjoyment ill-founded. About a week before the day fixed for the marriage, a letter was received from the executors of a rich but miserly uncle, informing him that the estate, of which he was the direct heir, and which alone (his own fortune being but moderate) had entitled him to intermarry with the wealthy and noble house of H——, was entirely lost to him, being, for some slight and unintentional offence, diverted from the direct course of inheritance in favor of a distant relation. His agitation on the receipt of this letter was remarked both by the inmates of his family, and by a party of gentlemen whom he joined a few hours afterwards in a fox-chase. During the course, and the dinner which followed at the inn of B., his actions as well as words were wild and extravagant. His excessive and even unnatural exhilaration was remarked by all, but it was attributed to the peculiar happiness of his present situation, (for the sudden defeat of his expectations was yet entirely unknown,) and to the wine, which, though habitually temperate, he drank that night in large quantities.

Late in the evening cards were introduced, in which Mr. W. joined with unusual eagerness, playing with a fierce recklessness that lost him almost every game. Yet any proposal to break off or reduce the stakes was received by him with high indignation, and resented as a personal affront. He swore several times, with bitter imprecations, that "he would let them know that he was rich enough for *them* yet." At length, after the gentleman had lost at least a thousand pounds by the most careless and injudicious play, one of the party

declared that he could not conscientiously continue while Mr. W.'s nerves were in their present excited state—offering him, however, his revenge at any time he chose. At this declaration Mr. W. took fire, insisting that "His nerves were perfectly composed,—the proceeding was unfair and ungentlemanly—that the whole was a cursed plot to trick a poor man out of the small remnant of his fortune ;—but he would suffer no imposition,—he would show them that though poor he was still equal to the best of them." It was with much difficulty that a challenge was prevented from passing, and he went away in a state of high excitement, leaving the company amazed at the avowals of poverty from one who was supposed to be the richest man present. No one suspected that his losses on that evening had exhausted above a year's income.

"Early the next morning," continued the narrator, "I was awakened by a message from the housekeeper of my friend, an old and faithful domestic, requesting me to come immediately to the relief of her master, who was, as she expressed it, "in a desperate bad way." I learned from the messenger that his master had risen about an hour before, and during that time his actions had been so wild and irrational as to excite in the servants a suspicion of insanity. When I arrived, the report of the housekeeper left no doubt on my mind of the truth of their surmises, though of the cause of this sudden outbreak all were ignorant. The fit, she said, seemed to have seized him while shaving, and since then he had amused himself with talking tragedy—with breaking every article of furniture, or throwing it out of the window,—and at last by calling the servants to him, and driving them from the chamber with his open razor. He seemed to consider this an excellent joke, and I heard, as I entered, his convulsive shouts of laughter at the precipitate flight of a terrified footman.

"I opened the door of his chamber, and beheld a singular spectacle. The floor was strewn with fragments of furniture, the bureau and dressing-table were overturned, and the bed-curtains torn down, one of them being wrapped around his left arm as if he had been engaged in fencing. He was half dressed and half shaved,—his morning gown hung in strips from his shoulders, and the lather still clung to one ghastly cheek, while down the other ran a stream of blood from a gash which he had accidentally inflicted when the frenzy seized him. His head was sunk on his chest, and his arms folded,—the right hand

still grasping the open razor. Suddenly he raised his head and the wild glare of his unsteady eye told too surely that reason had for a while deserted her throne. He did not remark my entrance but began, in a most feeling accent, and with a tone and gesture which I have never seen surpassed, (for it was from *nature*,) one of the most affecting of Lear's speeches. Before he had finished it, some noises which I made attracted his attention ; he started, gazed a moment irresolutely, and then advancing to me, saluted me with much courtesy. 'You must excuse my dishabille, Mr. G——,'said he, 'from the earliness of the hour. I am very glad to see you, however. The reason of my sending for you was to ask a small favor of you, which I know you will not refuse. I want you to stand my friend in a certain affair which I have on my hands. I am determined to challenge A——, and N——, and V——, (naming the gentlemen who had been his companions at play the night before,) all of them — all at once, by G—d ! I will show them that I am still a match for the whole pack of them, though I am poor. And this is the way I'll take them ; you see I have been practising tussle-fencing this morning ; I will catch N.'s point under my own, so——, and settle V. with a side-lunge, thus —— ;' and he made a furious stab at me with his weapon, which I escaped by a hasty retreat ; upon which he made the hall ring with his bursts of maniac laughter.

"I suggested to the housekeeper the propriety of securing the unhappy man and depriving him of his razor, otherwise there was every reason to fear some irreparable injury to himself or others. She had already sent, she said, for the family physician, and also for a certain William Waldo, a locksmith, who had acquired considerable reputation for his remarkable success in subduing the violence of insanity ; and as the power was said to reside in his look, he commonly went by the name of 'the Crazy Eye.' I had heard of such individuals before, but never having given much credit to the accounts of their feats, I had naturally great curiosity to witness an attempt. In a short time Waldo arrived ; he was a middle-aged man, with the look of an intelligent artisan, but nothing remarkable in his appearance. His eyes, I remarked, were of a dull hazel. He seemed to understand perfectly the business in which he was engaged, and to act like a man accustomed to such scenes. Opening the door of the chamber, he advanced boldly to the madman, who was in the heart of a soliloquy ;

and laying his hand firmly, but respectfully, on his shoulder, said, 'Sir, you are my prisoner.' The glare which he received was in the highest degree fierce and deadly, and I trembled for the fellow ; but it was only for a moment,—the next instant the eye of the madman quailed before the steady, unwavering gaze of the *tamer*,—the wildness vanished from his look, and he yielded, without resistance, to the grasp of his conqueror. It was a strange sight,—the tall, athletic figure of my friend cowering before the slight and feeble form of the simple mechanic. He was immediately put to bed, and by the direction of the physician, who arrived soon after bled and cupped. To all these operations he submitted with a patient sufferance, amounting almost to unconsciousness ; for he was still under the influence of the locksmith's eye, which seemed to exert an almost fascinating effect upon him. I had a momentary glimpse of it, and I was not surprised at the power of the look. It was frightful. I cannot describe it ; but I remember thinking, many years after, when I first read Coleridge's Christabel, that the picture of the sorceress's eye[358] bore a most vivid likeness to the image impressed on my memory. The iris seemed to be contracted, and, as it were, concentrated into the pupil, and the color had changed from hazel to a deep black ; the lids were half-shut ; and the whole character of the eye was what I may call snake-like. You will say that much, if not all, of this metamorphosis was supplied by my imagination ; but the remembrance which I bare of the look itself, and of my own horror at the sight, will not allow of such an explanation as satisfactory, at least to my own mind.

"My friend's malady, I am sorry to say, was never wholly subdued ; and he died, a few months after this occurrence, of a brain fever. His betrothed is still single ; I understand that she has since refused several unexceptionable offers. They loved each other, I think, with an affection that I have never seen surpassed.

"My curiosity was much excited, as you may suppose, by the scene of which I had been a witness ; and I put several questions to the man on the nature of the singular power which he possessed. I obtained but little satisfaction. He himself was altogether ignorant of its origin, and had not even been aware of the change which took place in his eye, until it was remarked by his neighbors. The occasion

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358 "those shrunken serpent eyes." Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), "Christabel" (1816).

on which he discovered that he possessed the power was somewhat remarkable.

"You may have heard of Sir William P——, who made a considerable figure in the political world about eighteen years ago. His death, I remember, created a great sensation in England. He had been a member of parliament from B—— for several years, and had distinguished himself by his vehemence in debate and his eccentricity. The latter quality had displayed itself during the last session, rather awkwardly for him, in the introduction and support of several bills totally inconsistent with his known political sentiments and with the wishes of his constituents, among whom he was exceedingly popular. It being the eve of an election, they were desirous of hearing from their old and much-loved member an explanation of the course he had latterly pursued, not doubting but it must be perfectly satisfactory ; for calumny itself had not dared to breathe a suspicion against the spotless integrity of Sir William P——. A grand dinner was accordingly given him, at which many hundreds of the most respectable landholders in the county were present. The speech which he delivered at the close was a singular medley. With much of sound political reasoning and statesman-like policy, there were mingled opinions and principles which the most fanatical Jacobin[359] would have hesitated to utter—principles of an alarming tendency, yet advanced with an earnest warmth which left no doubt of his sincerity, and maintained with an acuteness of argument that few but himself were capable of. The auditors sat in speechless amazement, hardly able to believe the evidence of their senses—yet none suspected the real cause.

"Among those present was Waldo. He sat very near and opposite Sir William, so that he had a fair view of him throughout the evening. He remarked, as he said, an unusual wildness of the eye and tremulous movement of the hands, and he could not help regarding the baronet with a fixed look of astonishment,—with perhaps a slight mingling of indignation at what he heard. On a sudden their eyes met, and the effect was singular. The orator paused, leaned forward over the table at which he was speaking, and for the space of a minute fixed on his astonished constituent a glare of absolute horror ; the expression of his eye, Waldo said, resembled that of a brute's un-

359 A radical republican during the French Revolution.

der the influence of terror—dilating, and, as it were, shivering. At the end of the minute the baronet seemed by a strong effort to recover his recollection ; shading his eyes with his hand, he sank pale and trembling into a seat, and was heard to say faintly— 'Take him away,—for God's sake, take him away ! I cannot bear it.' Waldo, of course, immediately left the hall, but Sir William found himself unable to proceed in his address. The next day he was a raving maniac, and shortly after perished by his own hands in a most shocking manner.

"Waldo was surprised, on this occasion, by the universal declaration of all present, that his eye, while he regarded the baronet, had undergone an almost incredible change ; some said it was contracted,—others that the color had altered ; all agreed in terming the expression a terrible one, though none could account for its peculiar effect on the speaker, otherwise than by the supposition of some mysterious sympathy between that look and the insane mind. Waldo, naturally enough was inclined to consider the assertion as the offspring of that fondness for the marvellous which loves to account for every inexplicable event by a still more wonderful cause. It was not till after numerous and careful experiments had been followed by invariable success that he dared to attribute to himself a power which carries with it an appearance of something superhuman. At present, however, so settled is his conviction of the infallible efficacy of that look, that he does not hesitate to approach the most ungovernable maniac in his wildest paroxysm. He had never, he said, seen another possessing the same power, but he heard that in the north of Britain and in Ireland they were not uncommon ; in the latter country they were generally known by the appellation of *tamers*."

How much of my English friend's narrative is to be ascribed to a lively imagination, and how much of truth there may be in the account, is left with the reader to decide. If the hypothesis of a real organic efficacy in the eyes of certain individuals be allowed, an explanation will perhaps be furnished of some remarkable facts that have for centuries perplexed the ablest physiologists. Whence arise the common belief that no animal, however furious, can endure the steady gaze of a human eye ? Fatal experience has proved that of all eyes this observation cannot be true ; but the opinion could never have been so extensively diffused without the support of well-estab-

lished instances. The epithet *snake-like*, applied by my friend to the expression of the locksmith's eye, leads to the consideration of the fascinating power which certain reptiles are said to possess,—a power which was once confidently denied, until multiplied observation had ascertained its existence, and which naturalists have attempted in vain to explain. Concerning the origin of this ocular influence, no conjecture in the present state of our experience can be hazarded ; in the hope that it may lead to some further investigation of this remarkable phenomenon, the foregoing relation is submitted to the attention of the curious.

H. E. H.

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ANNA'S LANDING.

THROUGH the whole line of New England there flows not to the ocean a more beautiful stream than the small river Ashawang. A day's ride will enable one to trace it from its sources to the sea, and to survey it in the various characters of brook, rivulet, and river. There is nothing very extraordinary in it, but it is a very pretty stream, flowing in beautiful sweeps through rich meadows, whose green fringes trail in its waters, and round bold, precipitous points, clothed to the water's edge with laurel, the pride of our northern woods, or with luxuriant vines, to gather whose clusters we had to ascend the ruin and pick them as we sat in our boats. And rich beyond description from one of these heights is a summer view of its course through the meadows—winding away like a sinuous sheet of silver set in emerald, with the purple clouds of evening sleeping at a far depth within it, and the button-woods on its banks standing as distinctly in its mirror as life, but with all the wire edge of reality taken *off*. For the last five miles of its course, it is cut up into a succession of lake-like sheets, by low wooded points, whose trees, unembarrassed by underwood, rise from a smooth carpet of turf, straight, and graceful, like Corinthian columns. In the distance they appear exactly like islands, or like trees standing in the water, and remind one forcibly of the floating gardens of the lake Tescuco.[360]

Two miles below the village of P., and five from the mouth of the Ashawang, is one of the largest of those low beautiful points already noticed. It is occupied solely by an immense elm, which rises to a height, and spreads to an extent, which, in this latitude, is truly astonishing. I verily believe that it cannot be matched in New England. Not another shrub grows upon the point, or island, as it is at flood tide, but it stands unrivalled and alone, seen far up and down

[360] A salt lake near the Aztec city of Tezcuco, near present-day Mexico City. In the valley of Mexico, vegetables and flowers were traditionally cultivated in floating gardens or *chinampas*.

the river, extending its arms over it like a protecting genius. The stream here has expanded to the breadth of half a mile, and, in its rapid whirl round the point, discloses a continuous line of granite ; so that it is highly probable that the whole point is a vast pillar of flat rock drawn from the depths of the stream,—a fitting basis for the immense Colossus of the vegetable race which it sustains. The tide and eddy on the south side form a little bay, so that the point presents an area nearly circular of about two acres, rising gently from the water to the center where stands the tree. The turf is close, and green enough for the foot of a fairy, an idea which the damsels of the place in former days improved upon ; and had the redoubted Basil Hall,[361] and others of his cockney brethren, visited it some fifteen years ago, they might have seen a sight which in all his career of 'sight-seeing' in this country it seems he never saw, and which is a *sine qua non* in his creed of civilization,—he might have seen a score or more of youths and maidens dancing on that beautiful green to the music of their own sweet voices.

The neighboring domain, as well as the spot in question, belongs to the Lowells, whose family seat stands at a little distance in full view of the elm and river. It is one of those large, old fashioned mansions, built long before the revolution, and which, by continuing in the same family ever since, and that family maintaining a uniform and elevated rank, begins to have something extremely aristocratical associated with it. After all our prosing about democracy, such families had a certain importance attached to their antiquity, which is far from being uncomfortable, as I have more than once remarked, when I have been shown the family pictures of the Lowells. I cannot imagine anything more imposing than General Lowell's tall, erect figure, surmounted as it is with a most majestic brow shaded with the silvery honors of sixty years. Nor can I conceive of a finer model of feminine grace than the person of Anna Lowell, as, thirteen years ago, she moved, like an angel of a better sphere, through the ranks of society, the cynosure of each eye, and the blessed of every heart. Child as I was, I recollect distinctly the impression made upon me when first I saw her. There was an indescribable softness in her face, even when composed and silent, which was irresistibly winning, and

361 Captain Basil Hall (1788–1844) was a British naval officer who commanded vessels on scientific and exploration voyages. After he left the navy, he traveled in the United States and published his *Travels in North America* (1829).

I thought that if a frighted bird were to enter the room, it would fly instinctively to the bosom of Anna Lowell. It was the thought of a child, but the reader will probably form from it a better idea of the character of her beauty, than if I were to spend an hour in describing it. Of course so bright a jewel could not be hidden. But vain were any attempts at appropriation, on the part of the stranger youths who visited the vale of Ashawang. By the young men of the place it was never dreamed of; for every body knew that she was betrothed in heart almost from infancy to a ward of her father's, who was every way so worthy of her, that competition was out of the question. So close had been their connection from childhood, and so completely did they seem made for each other, that their marriage was expected as a thing of course. 'Matches are made in heaven,'[362] said the neighbors, whenever they alluded to the subject, and indeed, they could not have quoted a better commentary on this favorite adage than the loves of Alfred Darrach and Anna Lowell. Her life had passed like a dream of Elysium,[363] up to her eighteenth summer; and she had promised at its close to ratify at the altar the tacit vows of her childhood and the blushing confessions of mature years. Alfred was in all the bustle of preparation, the joy of his heart scarcely allowing him to sleep. A spacious house was going merrily up at a short distance from the General's, and high beat the heart of Alfred as he thought of it as his future home, and in the delightful train of associations connected with the idea fell into a light slumber to dream of bliss more exquisite than often falls to the lot of mortals.

The village of P., at the period of which I write, was often visited by religious awakenings. But it must be confessed, that the fruits of these seasons were too often like mushrooms, or, more aptly, like the seed scattered by the way side. The truth is, that although the inhabitants of P. were, in the main, intelligent, and many of them wealthy and indued with the polish of a city education, yet there was among them a general want of religious knowledge. An unaccountable mistiness involved the whole subject. Rational upon every other, whenever they approached the most interesting of all subjects, they divested themselves of reason's aid altogether, and placed them-

362 "Marriage and hanging go by destiny; matches are made in heaven." An adage attributed to the English clergyman and writer Robert Burton (1577-1640).

363 In Greek mythology, it was a heavenly place which welcomed those who were favored by the gods when they died.

selves in the capacity and attitude of children, not at the feet of Christ, but of his ministers, or of any one who chose to assume that title. Hence, they were exposed to the greatest impositions. Many wolves in sheep's clothing came among them, and others who, though they might have been *sheep* of the true flock, were vastly unfit for shepherds. The ministerial garb, like the friar's hood and mantle in Catholic countries, often covered a multitude of absurdities, if not of sins. It gave confidence to impudence and imposture, and respectability, and even reverence, to ignorance and stolidity. I said the ministerial garb ; but this phrase needs correction ; for the preacher was as likely to mount the pulpit in a drab pea-coat, as a sober suit of black ; and 'motley's the only wear'[364] has more than once been my thought, on seeing some fantastical nondescript rise, with his eyes set in his head, to address the congregation at P.

It was in the latter part of the summer above mentioned, the eighteenth of Anna's age, that a powerful 'awakening,'[365] which had been gathering strength in the neighboring towns, burst like a torrent along the vale of Ashawang. It was urged on by a new and very extraordinary preacher. In those days the congregations being very large, and a meeting house unable to contain them, with the simplicity of the Apostolic age they repaired to the fields, where I verily believe the excitement was greater than could have been produced within walls. I am not describing a camp meeting. Christians of every name under heaven, attended these meetings ; and preachers of every creed addressed them. This movement was merely the effect of necessity, and of a certain rural taste in the people, caught unavoidably from the beautiful scenery of the neighborhood. It was time and place best suited to the talents of Louis Beebee. It was where his bold and flowing rhetoric could range without let or bound, and in the most impassioned strains, he could call upon inanimate nature to aid his argument for the truths of revelation, and upon the heavens and the earth to be astonished at the obduracy of his race. His was plainly a mind of no ordinary stamp, and his style and language betrayed that no ordinary pains had been bestowed on

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364 William Shakespeare (1564-1616), *As You Like It* (Act II. Scene 7).

365 The Great Awakening was a series of religious revivals which arose in the American colonies by the middle of the 18th century. It was promoted by rousing preachers, such as Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), whose eloquence deeply moved crowds of believers, sometimes to the point of falling into a trance.

its cultivation. His personal appearance was very striking. A figure slender but rather tall, sharp features, contrasted by an unusually high and ample forehead, at whose base burned two coal black eyes, with a light as shady, and apparently as quenchless as two stars, made him sufficiently remarkable. Never shall I forget the feeling of awe, not unmingled with fear, with which I saw him rise for the first time, beneath the Great Elm, and with a deliberation peculiar to himself, pass his cold, and at the same time burning eye, over the multitude who sat beneath and still, as if fascinated by his gaze. His appearance did not belie him : rarely has any man since the apostolic age addressed an audience with such unction. But powerful as was his preaching, Louis Beebee depended mainly for success in his labors (the divine blessing always excepted) upon his private conferences with the awakened. In these, as to a father confessor, they would communicate to him their feelings, their hopes and fears. The deep insight which he thus gained into the characters of the people, joined to the sanctity of his life, and his dazzling talents, soon gave him unlimited influence over the thoughts, actions and habits, which, had he been an ambitious or a less holy man, might have proved a dangerous possession. But thus far he had labored with a single eye to the glory of his Master ; and though he held some doctrines, which, to me, it seems blasphemous to impute to the character of Jehovah, yet he had the discretion to touch but lightly upon them in public. Would that he had been equally careful in private !

Anna Lowell, although every action of her life might challenge scrutiny, had never made any pretensions to religion. Darrach, through disgust at most of the preachers, had avoided meetings, and though strictly moral, was a little opposed to revivals as managed by them. Anna had often stayed away to oblige him ; but the subject of religion was one on which she had speculated much and at times felt acutely, and as yet her searching, wandering spirit found no rest. She resolved to go once more. It was on the day when Beebee made his debut under the Great Elm. Every word he uttered seemed addressed to herself. She went again, and her distress increased to such a degree that she begged her mother to send for Mr. Beebee.

Beebee was a man in the prime of life, certainly not more than thirty-three, and though his brow was pale as marble and his cheek thin and chastened by constant toil to the same hue, yet his eye be-

trayed the smothered fire within, and we will not say whether his anxiety was not greater, and his labors more zealous for the lovely sinner, than was his wont in ordinary cases.

The labors of Louis Beebee at length were blessed. Anna found peace, or thought she found it, although her exercises had been sufficiently severe to impair her health, and there still lingered upon her mind a dejection which not all her efforts could throw off. Her cheek had faded, her eye from the frequent flow of tears had lost its brightness, and a general debility and nervousness seized her frame. Darrach beheld this change with sorrow not unmixed with indignation at what he thought her weakness. He almost quarrelled with her parents for allowing Beebee to gain such an influence over her, and to the preacher he could hardly bring himself to give a pleasant word or look.

'Do not tell me that you are happy,' said he, as he paced the room with a troubled step and a tearful eye, 'this change that I see in you is not happiness ? It was not always with such cold eyes and such freezing solemnity, that you received me. Would to God you were mine indeed !—this Beebee— the incubus that sits upon your peace of mind[366]—should know his place.'

Thus he would frequently address her, but as she answered only with her tears, he would lose all patience, and leave her, muttering curses upon him who, he feared, had made her wretched forever. As the only remedy, he resolved to have an early day appointed for the marriage, endeavored to sooth his chafed spirit by hurrying forward his preparations, inwardly exulting in the unlimited control he would soon have over her happiness, and divising sundry vague plans of chastisement for the preacher if he ever dared to enter his door. He was high spirited, and rash, and cared not for public opinion, when once his temper was raised. In this state of mind, he went to New York to provide some articles for their domestic establishment.

Although every day of absence seemed an age, he was detained much longer than he had anticipated, and did not return till the end of the first week in September. He hastened immediately to Lowellpoint, to see his bride elect, and to fix his wedding day. As he was

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366 A lascivious demon, or fallen angel, supposed to sit on women's chests during their sleep and have sexual intercourse with them. Because of the pressure on the chest, and the corresponding feeling of anxiety, the incubus is often associated with the nightmare, a theme powerfully illustrated in Fuseli's painting "The Nightmare" (1781).

entering the house, he encountered Beebee. The blood rose in his brow as he met the confused look of the preacher ; and he turned and looked after him, half tempted to follow and to do he did not know what. At length, stifling his passion, he entered the house. Mrs. Lowell was in tears—the General looked angry and perplexed, and, after shaking hands with Alfred, left the room.

'What is the matter,' said Alfred—' where is Anna ?' But observing that her distress increased, he was hurrying to the dot of Anna's parlor, when it opened. But instead of rushing forward to meet his betrothed, the unhappy youth recoiled and stood as if transfixed. Merciful heaven ! was that wan, wasted figure, his own Anna? He gazed upon her till his eye drank in from the vacant, unmeaning stare of her's, the whole dreadful truth, and then dropped upon a chair and hid his face. Anna approached him with the noiseless step of a spirit, and endeavored to raise his head, smiling occasionally the painful smile of idiocy, till her lip began to work convulsively, and to mutter certain inarticulate sounds.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," at length she said ; and dropped as if the words had annihilated her. Oh, the horrid truth which these words revealed !

'Fiend !—devil !'—screamed Alfred, springing from his seat.

'Alfred, Alfred !' said Mrs. Lowell, in alarm, coming from the sofa where she had laid Mary, and laying her hand on his shoulder,—'he is a minister—he thought it his duty.'

'Duty !' shouted the despairing youth, 'were an angel of light to come to me, with such a foul perversion of the gospel on his tongue, I would not believe him.' As he spoke he pointed to the sofa and groaning in uncontrollable agony, out of the house. He instinctively made for Beebee's quarters, but he had gone to hold a meeting in a neighboring village. The next day was Sunday, however, and he was preaching under the 'great elm.' Sunday came, but not Beebee, and the people after waiting in vain, till a late hour, dispersed to their homes. The bird had flown, and never more was he seen in the vale of the Ashawang.

Beebee had gone too far. Struck with the uncommon loveliness of Anna Lowell, and ignorant of the strength of her attachment to Darrach, he had been tempted with what views we know not, to quote to her the text which haunted her memory when everything

else but the image of Alfred had been obliterated as with searing lava. It startled her at first, but at length in his solemn and persuasive way, he supported it so well with argument and scripture, that it settled upon her conscience with the weight of conviction. Instant war arose between love and reason ;—the conflict was dreadful, but in her weak state soon decided, and reason fled forever. Beebee was frighted at his own work. The extent of his success appalled him. Had he not been blinded by passion, and pressed for time, (for September was already come, and one of its days was to be chosen for their nuptials,) he would have been wiser than to start so harrassing a subject in the present state of her nerves. But it was done. Remorse drove him nearly distracted, and he was hurrying from the house on his last visit, pretty much with the sensation of one who has unconsciously set his own house on fire over the heads of his family, when he met Alfred. The haste with which he decamped, probably saved Alfred from some act that might have embittered his recollections forever.

Time progressed, and the snows of December whitened the fields, and the winds of the north whistled through the half covered house which Alfred had begun, and which now stood neglected and desolate, the very image of his heart. Anna's insanity became more settled, and as the month of January drew near, her fits of wildness became frequent. Day after day would she walk her chamber, till she dropped upon the bed from utter exhaustion. All night would she moan and talk to herself, or to some invisible being, with whom she would reason and expostulate, and then turn away and weep. At times, as if she had exhausted her entreaties, she would rise and fly shrieking out of the room, and, not unfrequently, drop upon her knees in an imploring attitude, as to some one pursuing her—'I have given him up,' she would cry,—'I have—I have—but you—you !—I cannot have *you* !'—and then rising and shaking her clenched hand and laughing the air of one who had wrestled with her eternal enemy, she exclaimed, 'there is no scripture, for that !—no—no—there is no scripture for that !'

One morning, late in January, having, like most other boys of the village, risen early in order to gain one precious hour for play before the odious chime of nine, I was surprised to see several groups of men collected in the streets, some talking earnestly, but in a low

tone, and others standing pale and silent as if listening to some horrible tale. I was too young to ask questions. I passed on to another group, in the centre of which sat Horace Lowell, Anna's youngest brother, a lad of fifteen, on horseback. The extremity of distress was pictured on the expressive face of the boy, and the stunned look of dismay and curiosity and sympathy might be traced, passing his successive shades over the faces of his auditors, as they listened to his oft repeated tale. 'His poor sister was lost—he knew not how—nor where !' But curiosity, which often delights in puzzling itself, at length yielded to the omnipotent voice of humanity, and with one impulse all set off for Lowell Point, where a scene of distress was enacting, difficult to describe, and aggravated to its acme by the most horrid suspense.

Anna, the evening previous, had been unusually calm, and had been left at a late hour by her mother to the care of her own maid. The girl appeared much frightened, and gave a very confused account ; it was evident that she had been asleep and knew nothing of the matter. Anna had undoubtedly risen in one of her fits of wildness, and to escape from the fiend that haunted her imagination, had rushed out of the house. Every, thicket, rock and building, within a circuit of two miles had been searched, but in vain. The river was not forgotten. It was strictly examined as being the most suspicious place ; but she was not to be found, and it seemed as if she had been spirited from the earth without leaving any trace of her passage.

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And yet Louis Beebee was no common man. He preached well, and lived even better than he preached ; and but for one error, might have been held up as a perfect model of evangelist. Two years after the date of this narrative the following paragraph appeared in a southern paper :—

"Died in the Insane Hospital, where he has been kept the last eighteen months, the Rev. Louis Beebee, aged 36, in the only lucid season he has had for that period."

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The Cold Hand ; a Tale.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE PURITAIN"

My story is a mournful one, for when I tell you I am a female, with an ugly face and a vain heart, you will understand at once that I am a child of sorrow. I will relate my narrative ; for it cannot gratify my vanity, and some may take warning.

I was the daughter of a wealthy merchant in New Haven,[367] who, having only one child besides myself, resolved to give us both a finished education. He spared no expense, for he loved us with excessive fondness ; and gowns, and ribbons, and feathers were bestowed upon me from my earliest childhood, as fast as blossoms drop from the trees to the ground at the close of the vernal season. His other child was a sister, about one year and six months older than myself, whom every body complimented as being excessively handsome. She was obviously my father's favorite ; and many were the compliments she received for her beauty before her charms were fully unfolded. I can seem to see her now, (for she has long since been in her grave,) with her chestnut locks, her hazel eyes, her slender frame ; all of which were objects of envy and hatred to me. In our earliest years I had no doubt of my own superiority to her. At school I was our instructress's favorite ; my powers were evidently superior, and I had not the least doubt I should find a better fortune in subsequent life.

But as we grew up to womanhood, she became the handsomest and I the ugliest of all mortals. I was very tall, with large hands and feet, a sallow, olive skin, grey eyes without the least ex-

367 A city in Connecticut on Long Island Sound. Founded in 1637-1638 by Puritans, it was a strict theocratic colony absorbed by Connecticut in 1664.

pression ; I had the scars of the scrofula[368] on my neck. My eyebrows were white, like the hair of a man affected with the leprosy ; my voice was hoarse and unmusical ; and, in short, heaven seemed to display its avengeful skill in encasing my spirit in a carcase fit only for a fiend. Yet such is the pleasing self-flattery and self-deception in which we are apt to allow ourselves to be lost, that it was a long time before I suspected the reason why my sister ran away with all the attentions in every party. My jokes were heard without laughter, and my smiles never spread gladness through the room. Whenever I approached a youth of the other sex with a look of confidence and a smile of familiarity, he shrunk back as at the sight of a ghost. I wished to be social and love mankind, but they receded from me with horror whenever I approached them.

It will perhaps be asked me why I did not keep a looking-glass ; and whether it was possible for a woman, even with such a face as mine, not sometimes to place herself before it. But I would reply to the philosophy of him whose ignorance prompts him to ask such a question, that a looking-glass can as little show us the deformities of our faces as the common measure of self-knowledge can reveal to us the imperfection of our minds. I was ignorant of both.

The students of the college were accustomed frequently to wisit at our house. I was passionately fond of literature, and their conversation and company to me were entertaining. Among the rest there was one youth by the name of Wardwell, who used to pay some attention to me. He conversed with me on such books as I had read ; sometimes disputed my observations and sometimes confirmed them. I was anxious to show him the beauties of my own mind ; for as I began to suspect that I had few other beauties, it was by these I must expect to captivate his heart.

My sister Jane, (for that was the name of my elder sister,) was considered as very fascinating in her manners, and was always surrounded by a troop of admirers ; she was quick in her apprehensions, witty, always in good humor ; and, being always admired, she could afford not to be envious or jealous towards me. But my feelings were different towards her. I am unwilling to believe that all sisterly love was extinguished from my breast. If she had been poor, I should certainly have relieved her ; if she had been sick, I should have watched

368 Lymph nodes of the neck.

around her bed. But I could not bear the praises that were always bestowed upon her, the marked preference which in every company she was sure to receive. Poor I was always thrown into the back-ground. If she went out of town and returned, there was much joy ; such a cordial shaking of the hand ; if she entered a party, there was such a brightening in every face—there were so many good things said of her when absent—so many *tells*, while there were no *tells* for poor me ; in short, her constant superiority tilled my heart with jealousy and rage ; so that, like Joseph's brethren,[369] I hated, and could scarcely speak peaceably to her. I knew myself to be her superior in mental endowments ; and to be always seen in her superior light—to be always cast into shade—to be a perpetual foil to set off her *agreeables*, it was more than I knew how to bear ! I was very unhappy ; and I am afraid that my homely features were made still worse by a moral expression, which I knew not how to conceal. My sister, on the contrary, was artless and open-hearted ; she never returned my taunts or peevish expressions ; but, alas ! it is a cheap virtue to be good-natured when life is prosperous and every eye smiles upon you. It was evident my compassionate sister pitied my case, and that was the most exasperating thing that she could have done. To be the object of her pity blew my temper into seven-fold rage. I felt a sort of indefinite malignity towards her, which prompted me to an indefinite revenge.

There was a young gentleman, a member of the senior class, and the first scholar in his class, who was then becoming very particular in his attentions to my sister. It seemed very strange to me, I confess, that a man of his taste and discernment should be so taken with the superficial accomplishment, beauty, and overlook all the superior qualities of mind, that deathless principle, which will last when form and colors, with all their graces and roses, shall have passed away. But so it was ; Mr. Harwood (that was his name) was all attention to Jane ; and, what was more provoking, I could hardly interest him enough to detain his attention. If Jane was absent when he visited our house, his stay was sure to be short ; and if for a moment on such occasions he sat down with me for a transient chat, he would dance his vacant foot or hum a tune, and return such answers to my observa-

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369 Joseph was the favored son of Jacob and Rachel; having renounced to kill him, his brothers sold him into slavery out of jealousy (Genesis: 37).

tions as to show his thoughts were away wool-gathering in other regions. Is this the treatment due to a lady ? Is this the discrimination of a man of sense ? Alas, men may talk about superficial accomplishments and the vanity of our sex ; but place the most gaudy rose in their sight, and they will trample on all the encrusted jewels in their path to gain it ; and in my opinion the greatest scholars make the best fools.

For some time Mr. Harwood had been paying his attention to my sister, and I must confess she never gave herself any airs of superiority, never treated me with the pride of an insolent beauty ; but somehow I saw, or thought I saw, an insult in her very kindness and condescension. Her very acts of sisterly affection seemed to me a poor thin covering to conceal her own superior happiness. Many were the taunts and sharp replies with which I met her most innocent questions ; and I used to call her Madame Beauty ; I used sneeringly to say—"O, you are all perfection ; you are the universal favorite ; your loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament ;" and I found occasion to pick a quarrel with her every hour in the day. She had a sweet temper, and I was angry that heaven had withheld all its best gifts from me to rain them with superfluous profusion on her more fortunate head.

It may be asked, perhaps, how such dreadful passions find their way into human breasts. I had read in Ovid (for I was quite a scholar) a description of Envy—

> "Pallor in ore sedet ; macies in corpore toto ;
> Nusquam recta acies ; livent rubigine dentes."[370]

I had always considered it as the worst passion of the human breast ; it is also highly unreasonable, even on selfish principles ; because it never inflicts a blow without jarring its own hand more than it wounds its object. It may be asked, then, how, with my clear perception, I admitted a passion into my soul which I knew at once to be both hateful and tormenting ? The fact is, I had no idea that I was actuated by envy ; I was like a scholar whom I heard say—that he always despised a glutton, and yet became one himself because he knew not the sin when it became his own. It is always thus with our

370 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, (Book 2, lines 775-76): "Pallor lies in her face; gaunt is her whole body; / She has a perpetual squint and a bluish rust covers her teeth." (our translation).

impetuous passions ; fixed on their objects, they have no leisure or disposition to contemplate their own natures.

But I could have better borne my sister's superiority, at least in beauty, had it not been for an incident which put the finishing stroke to my bud passions. Beauty I could have conceded to my sister ; graces, taste, dress, outward accomplishments—these were all indisputably hers ; and I was trying so to adjust the balance, that I could contentedly give her these things while I claimed for myself the inward adornings of the mind. I had heard her praises in every company, and was beginning to be willing to hear them, when, one evening as I was walking home from a religious lecture, I happened to come behind a party of youth, of whom I soon discerned that Harwood was one. Perhaps I ought to mention, that almost the only bodily perfection which heaven had seen fit to bestow on me, was a remarkably acute ear. Whether it was my feverish solicitude or my nerves, whether it was nature or practice, yet so it was, that no mortal could hear a fainter sound at a farther distance than I. I could hear a whisper from the farthest corner of any room while the whole company were talking ; and this faculty, I believe, exasperated my temper ; for I often heard more remarks about myself than I desired. I found these youths were talking about the New Haven girls, and among the rest, of our family. "Jane," said one, "is a most accomplished beauty ; what an eye ! what a shape ! what a matchless expression ! But I believe she looks better for being set off in contrast to her sister Kate. Did you ever see," continued he, "such a fright ? She would make a good witch to ride on a broomstick !"

"Yes," said another, "she looks like a Fury[371] and acts worse ; but you must allow she has some sense. She is at least equal to her sister in that point." "I doubt that," cried the first. "She has read some books and has some vanity, but that only makes her a greater idiot ; I called her a witch, but she lacks talents even for that." Only think of it ; this very wretch who made this remark, had paid me a compliment on my understanding a few evenings before, and had begged a copy of verses which I had composed, and which he had pronounced beautiful ; and, as it was one of the few compliments I ever received in my life, I thought it sincere. O ! the deceitfulness of

371 Winged female divinities of the Greek mythology embodying revenge.

mankind ! O, the hypocrisy of their hearts and the honey of their tongues ! If I hate them, is the fault wholly my own ?

I went home that night in a perfect rage ; and my heart, like Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, was heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated.[372] After my head and that of my sister had pressed our several pillows, (for we slept together,) "So," said I, "Jane, I have found out a new perfection, in your character—I find you are not only a great beauty, but a great genius."

"What do you mean, sister," replied she.

"O, I mean that there never was such a character as my sister Jane. She is a pattern of perfection."

"My dear sister," said Jane, "it seems to me your heart is not towards me as it formerly has been, Pray tell me, what have I done ?"

"Done ! Such an angel as you of course can do no wrong. It is I that do all the harm."

"No, my dear Catharine, I charge you with nothing. Do explain yourself. What is my fault ?"

"You are proud as Lucifer."

"What instance can you give ?"

"Why," continued I, "it is seen in every thing ; in all you say or do ; in every word, motion, look, action. You are the vainest creature that ever walked the earth ; you are an insolent beauty."

"But your expressions are too strong to be true ; besides, Catharine, you speak in an unsisterly tone. Do you expect to benefit me by such reproofs as these ?"

"Well I have the most hateful temper. I am wrong, my dear Jane, I know I am wrong. Do forgive me."

Here we kissed each other, and went to sleep.

The next morning the sun shone into our chamber with a sweet tranquillity, and on the cherry-tree which grew before our window a red-breast sung his matins with artless animation. I arose in somewhat better temper, and resolved never after to charge my sister with a fault for the purpose of relieving my own spleen. I lifted the window and caught the balmy breeze ; I saw the leaves trembling on the boughs ; I heard the bird finish her carol. "Privileged creatures" said

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372 Nebuchadnezzar was a King of Babylonia (605–562); he destroyed Jerusalem and carried the Israelites into captivity. In a terrible fit of anger, he threw three of them into a fiery furnace cranked up "seven times hotter" than usual, but they came out unharmed, saved by their faith (Daniel 3: 1-30).

I, "nature has made you all alike. The same nest gives you equal melody and tinges your feathers with equal lustre. The ideas of beauty and comparison never enter your choirs. You are without sin, because you dwell apart from temptation. How much happier than our accursed race." I shut the window with violence, and went down to the household drudgery, for which I felt myself principally born.

I resolved, however, to govern my temper, and never more to reproach my sister. It was about this time that Wardwell began to pay his faint, cold, doubtful addressee to me. He was an awkward youth from the country, a charity scholar, who entered college at about the age of twenty-five. Fresh from the plough, he was the most ungainly fellow I ever saw ; and without the least pretensions to it, he had a great desire to be a ladies' man. He was a perfect contrast to Harwood, my sister's beau ; who, although his conversation was solid and sensible, was a perfect gentleman ; and, moreover, the first scholar in his class.

Commencement came ; Harwood graduated and, after delivering the valedictory oration, which was admired by all, went to Litchfield to study the law.[373] There were the usual protestations and promises, sighs and tears, at the leave-taking between him and my sister. He was deeply in love with her, and she with him ; though with the common policy of a cautious beauty, she concealed passion and he exaggerated his. (And, after all, even in this very paragraph perhaps I am only venting my hateful spleen ; and what I call in her female policy, may have been a nobler passion. Please therefore, reader, to correct my language, and for "female policy" read "female modesty.") Harwood left us, and for the first time in my life I saw my sprightly sister dejected ; and our house was now haunted by my poor beau, Wardwell.

I should certainly not for a moment have admitted the attentions of a raggamuffin, whom I considered so much my inferior, had it not been that I wished for a casting weight to make my condition equal to that of my sister. Besides, it is the hardest thing in the world to occupy a vacant heart. Wardwell was an absorbent for my envy ; he seemed as an opiate to put jealousy and rage asleep. It has been said

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373 A city in Connecticut founded in 1721, and in which the first Law school in the United States was opened in 1784.

by some, that poor company is better than none, and I am afraid that some of our sex have said the same of their lovers.

But, alas ! to the discontented the humblest path leads to mortification. I had noticed that Wardwell's eyes, whenever she was in the room, were straying to my sister ; he paid greater attentions to her remarks than to mine ; and whenever she was away, the first question he was sure to ask was, whither she had gone ; and sometimes the blundering wretch, when he spoke to me, would call me by her name. Once he had the carelessness, or insolence shall I call it ? to write me a billet, in which it was manifest from the superscription that her name had been erased and mine substituted. It was provoking when we were in company together to see, though he were sitting by my chair and my sister in the other part of the room, how perfectly absent he was from me while professedly talking with me ; how quick his ears were to hear every observation of hers ; how his eyes would steal away to watch her motions ; in short, he was mine in profession and hers in reality. At length the detestible hypocrite had the presumption to request me to bear a message to my sister avowing his love ; and he told me, that, supposing I must know that his attentions could not have been originally designed for me, he hoped I would do him and my sister the disinterested office of friendship to help them to that union on which his heart had all along been secretly set.

It is impossible for words to express the passions which flamed in my heart on this discovery. Rage, resentment, jealousy, despair, all mingled their black waves in my bosom. I was almost ready to curse the sun, the light of heaven, my own existence, and all mankind. I almost literally screamed in anguish ; I beat my breast, I tore my hair, and muttered some profane expressions, which are never more out of place than when found in a woman's mouth. "Go," said I, "insolent wretch ! and never let me see your face more. Flatterer, hypocrite, liar, deceiver, traitor, devil, leave my sight." And what was his reply ? "Miss," said he, "now you are handsome ; your face exactly tallies with your heart."

Yet, strange to tell, my rage was not half so strong against the guilty dissembler as it was against her who had been the innocent cause of it. Strange weakness of our sex we mistake the origin of our injuries, and impute malice where it is least to be suspected or found.

My resentment towards Wardwell cooled the moment he left the house ; nay, my fancy suggested apologies and palliation for his wrong. But towards my sister my rage was unconquerable, nor could any thing have cured it but her ceasing to be beautiful.

Resentment leads to revenge, and I immediately sat down to devise some plan to punish her for the pain she made me suffer. "Let me see," said I ; "If I scold at her, it will be nothing ; for I can't provoke her. A war of words will be vain ; if I poison her, it will be poor revenge. She will be a martyr, and I at once the executioner and tyrant. The whole pity of mankind will go with her. Besides, these poor material weapons cannot reach her heart. I wish to make her suffer where she has made me, I would blast her affections." I resolved, therefore, somehow or other, to separate her from Harwood, to whom she was becoming more and more attached.

I ought here to mention, that among all the excellences of Harwood's character, there was one weakness which in him was a perfect disease—he was excessively prone to be jealous ; and he could hardly bear, on the most indifferent occasion, to have a gentleman speak to my sister. It must not be concluded from this propensity he was a weak man ; people who judge from moral affinities are often most egregiously deceived. Jealousy, I know, is commonly thought to be the accompaniment of a strong passion and a weak head. In Harwood's case, the first part of the remark is true, but not the second. In fact, the associated qualities of our mind are strangely joined. I have known even a dandy to be a literary man, and a sloven a fool. Harwood was excessively jealous, and that was almost his only infirmity.

I at first thought I would write him a letter, telling him part of the truth ; and telling him farther that Wardwell was likely to be encouraged in his daring attempts to supplant him in my sister's affections. But on deeper reflection, a more refined plan struck my fancy. There was a youth in college, a brother to Harwood, whom he had delegated (such was his jealousy) to watch over my sister and see that none invaded the property which he wished to appropriate to himself. This office, which was a secret, gave him frequent access to our house. I therefore sent for Wardwell ; I told him I was sorry for the passion with which I had treated him ; I pretended that I never really expected that his views were directed to me ; and I promised to

favor his courtship of my sister provided he would first remove the only obstacle, the rival, which now occupies her heart. He, supposing I meant Harwood the elder, said, "And that, I suppose, will be no easy task." "Yes," said I. "It will be very easy ; but your thoughts are on a wrong track. You must know it is not he, but his brother, who now stands in your way. He is a lover only in name. Your best way will be to write him at Litchfield that his brother is supplanting him in my sister's heart ; and what with the contest and the jealousy, both may be out of your way, and there may be a fair passage for you to the haven of your happiness." Thus I deceived him ; for though nature has denied to our sex the strength of men, yet they are no match for us in malice or wit.

I need not dwell on this hateful story. Suffice it to say, my dupe wrote ; Harwood became alarmed, wrote a strange letter to my sister and another to his brother, received their replies, was not satisfied. The green-eyed monster[374] had affected his imagination. He came on to New Haven, charged my sister with the crime which my malice had formed and his imagination had exaggerated. High words arose between them ; much sighing, many perturbations, many tears ; mischief was at work ; and when they could no longer talk by words, they conversed by angry letters. It seemed also, that in parrying the charge, my sister had informed him that he had entirely mistaken the object of his jealousy ; for it was not his brother, but Wardwell, who was the traitor and supplanter of his affections. But this only increased his suspicions. Cooped up between two conditions, finding that there was an acknowledged rival in the case ; seeing that he was in some degree losing my sister's respect ; he suddenly broke the connexion, and went on board an Indiaman[375] for a three years voyage. In that voyage he was washed from the quarter-deck by a terrible wave, as the ship, in a tempest, was doubling the Cape of Good Hope.[376] My sister received the tidings from a newspaper just as she was inditing to him a letter of explanation, in which she thought she could not be too tender, nor hope for too happy an effect.

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374 "O! beware, my lord, of jealousy; it is the green-ey'd monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on." William Shakespeare (1564-1616), *Othello* (Act 3: Scene 3).

375 A large sailing ship engaged in commerce with India.

376 The southernmost tip of Africa, first circumnavigated in 1488 by the Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias (1450?-1500), who relevantly named it "Cape of Storms".

Her health had been failing for several months before this event had taken place. There was a poor Irish family which lived in the next street to ours, in which the mother, amidst her eight children, had been thrown on a bed of sickness, destitute of almost all the necessaries of life. The story reached us and touched my sister's compassion. For my part I troubled my head very little with the wants of such wretches. I considered them as born to suffer, and I left them to suffer ; but my sister was always poking her head into some of these scurvy hovels of misery and want. She might have sent relief but it was a maxim with her always to see the victims before she relieved them. How she could visit such abodes, I could not imagine. It was, however, in the spring ; the snow was melting, she took a cold, and had a cough all that season. Then came her trouble of mind—the agitation of parting from her lover—his absence and his death ; and not one kind word or look from me, for how could I sympathize with a humbled beauty. She was evidently going into a consumption, and we buried her just three months after the news arrived of the death of Harwood.

Just before she expired, she called me to her bedside, and taking my hand in the most affectionate manner, she asked me, since we were soon to part, to forgive all the negligences with which she might have treated me. "Sister," said she, "since you have regarded me of late with increasing coldness, and it is inexpressibly distressing to view myself as the guilty cause, shall I ask too much if ——." Here she fainted, and never recovered strength to finish her question ; the next day we were parted by death, for ever.

It was not until she had been dead a week that all my turpitude came rolling on my mind. But as I was retiring to rest, and saw the vacant pillow where she used to lie, the lines of Montgomery[377] came to my recollection,

"The head that oft this pillow prest,
That aching head has gone to rest."

I retired to sleep, but could not sleep ; I was agitated, feverish, nervous. The thought for the first time struck my mind that my nefarious plotting might have caused my sister's death. Her last dying

[377] James Montgomery (1771-1854), a British editor and poet, who was a strong abolitionist and an active member of the Bible Society; besides secular poetry, he wrote some 400 hymns.

words were ringing in my ears ; that she should ask pardon when the crime was mine, overwhelmed me. I seemed to see her pale, placid cheek, even in death softened with a gentle smile. It is impossible to describe the horror that came over me. My envy, my hatred, my rage, seemed to stand around me like so many fiends. I saw my selfishness in its true light. I regarded myself as the very worst being in creation. "Yes," said I, "Heaven is just ; it has stamped my heart's deformity on my face ; it has hung out a sign that all beings may avoid me ; and thou, my poor, martyred, injured sister, happier in thy sorrows than I in my success how gladly would I, with a scantling of thy virtues, sleep with thee. But I am one to whom life is insupportable, and the grave offers no refuge."

I tossed on my bed until the morning, and that day the thought of suicide entered my mind. It may seem strange, but though I had a full belief in a future existence and the retribution of eternity, I resolved to put an end to my life. I hardly know what were my expectations. There is a degree of moral distress which amounts to distraction. My feelings were too confused to analyse them. When evening came, I walked down to a little stream which runs beneath the cast rock, resolved to throw myself in, and sink to rise no more. I had a confused impulse on my spirits which urged me to this effort or relief. As I was walking to the scene, a little after sunset, a large black cloud, gleaming with lightning, surcharged with thunder, was spreading its vast, gloomy wings over the mountain ; and ever and anon the peals were falling on my ear. The scene suited my feelings and my purpose. As I walked over the lonely field, and saw the rugged peaks of East rock, and heard the tempest growling in the sky, every horror in nature seemed to add firmness to my purpose. I had resolved, and nothing seemed able to shake my resolution. Whoever has walked from the thicket of houses in New Haven to this spot, must have remarked the stillness and retirement that reigns around ; a few straggling trees shade the brink ; the water slumbers in its course ; the craggy precipices of the mountain lift their rocky heights ; and then, as you gaze below, the few trees on its brow seem growing in the sky. At this time the dreary scene was overspread by an exceedingly black cloud, emblem of the darker tempest which was warring in my breast. As I stood meditating for a moment on the awful prospect previously to my plunging into the water, there came a very heavy

clap of thunder, and the long repercussion of its roar shook me to the soul. It is strange, the sound alarmed me ; I had always been exceedingly fearful of thunder ; and though I thought I was resolved to die, yet this heavy sound suspended my purpose ; I walked home drenched in the rain, resolving to find some other passage to the world of spirits.

Still my purpose of self-destruction was not removed. To think was impossible ; to pray or hope for mercy was beyond my expectations, almost beyond my desire. It has often been observed of our sex, that the more violent forms of death, as of the sword or pistol, are not generally the chosen methods. The gentle opiate, laying at once conscience and consciousness asleep, is more pleasing to the female mind. I resolved, therefore, that night to take a quantity of opium, which should quiet me, if possible, for ever. The world was nothing to me ; I was a stranger in it. Even my venerable parents, only child as I now was, must almost cease to love me. Dissevered from the social tie, why should one linger in a world to which one ceases to belong.

I had placed my candle in a chair by my bedside ; and near, in a piece of blue paper, the dose which was to convey death to my hated body. My little morocco-bound bible lay on the table, and my sister-'s, just like it, lay by its side. I dared not look into them. But Southerne's Oroonoko[378] happened to be near me ; I opened it, and my eyes fell upon these lines

> "I would not live on the same earth with creatures
> That only have the faces of their kind."
>
> *Act IV. Scene* 2.

"Tis so," said I ; "these same faces are all." I took my opiate, and laid my head on my pillow as I supposed to rise no more.

But whether it was that my dose was not large enough, or whether it was that I had been accustomed to the use of opium, yet so it was, that, instead of death that night, I had a remarkable vision. Every one knows that opium, when it fails to produce death, fills the mind with phantoms and shadows created by a stimulated fancy.

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[378] *Oroonoko, a Tragedy* (1695) a play by the Irish dramatist Thomas Southerne (1660-1746), inspired by *Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave* (1688), a short novel by Aphra Behn (1640-1689), one of the first professional women writers in English.

However, I thought all real ; it seemed to me supernatural. I thought I was dying in consequence of my dose, and dreadful were the pangs of separation. My guilt lay like a mountain on my breast, and over me stood a fiend ready to catch my departing spirit. I felt myself to be expiring in the deepest fears, and the deepest despair. A cold hand seemed to cross my brow, and a low voice seemed to murmur IT IS ALL OVER WITH HER. I strove to groan, and could not ; to move, but strength was denied me. The candle looked as if it were waning, and the chamber was soon involved in almost total darkness. I seemed to be swimming off in an ocean of darkness, beyond the world, beyond the sun, moving with a fearful velocity ; and every little while a cold hand would gently press my forehead. It was inconceivably horrible. I supposed they were bearing me to hell, which I imagined lay far beyond the material creation. I thought I saw frightful monsters around me, winged beasts, birds of gigantic size with human faces, and dark hags, with their fingers dripping with blood. But amidst all these frightful forms there was a deep silence, and nothing seemed so dreadful as those intervals when the cold hand would just touch and cross my brow. It shot an unspeakable horror through my trembling frame. After moving on with a velocity compared with which that of light would be slow, all at once I saw the shades around tinged with a dim, livid flame. The monsters that were bearing me stopped, as if preparing to let me drop ; and, crying out in the sailor's phrase "stand from under," they let drop, and I felt myself to be falling through a vast vacuity ; every moment increased my progress, and I had no doubt I should soon plunge into that fiery lake where the wicked are believed to groan away their infinite ages of horror and despair.[379] At last I reached the bottom ; a sudden jar seemed to shake all my frame and beat the breath out of my body. I fainted, and lost my consciousness ; but in a little time recovered, and the first thing I felt was that same cold hand crossing my brow. I started up with horror, and looked around expecting to see ghosts screaming, fiery waves rolling, and tormenting fiends waiting to seize me for their prey,—when lo ! I found myself in a beautiful garden, the very image of paradise ; trees with mingled blossoms and fruit, crystal streams, clustering roses, birds in the branches, and every form of

379 Certainly borrowed from Milton's (1608-1674) vision of Hell in *Paradise Lost* (1667): see note 432.

happiness and delight. A little cherub, with a basket of flowers in his hand, came and presented me one ; but I could not smell, it smelt like brimstone ; another came with a cup of wine, which he offered me to drink, but to me it tasted like fire ; a third came and bound a garland of roses around my brow, but the cold hand thrust it off, and all its leaves lay withering at my feet. I arose, and strove to walk ; but every step was painful, and wherever I trod I saw a track of blood. If I touched a leaf or a tree, they immediately died and I thought myself more wretched than if I had, as I expected, dropped into a lake of fire. I saw a great many beautiful, happy beings, but they all began to shun me, so that I was in danger of being for ever alone. O, the horror of solitude ! I could not bear it. "Plunge me among the devils," said I ; "let me roll on burning oceans in company, but let me not dwell alone." At length there came a little smiling cherub, looking like a little healthy child about two years old, (I at first thought him smiling, but at length saw the tears mingled with his smiles,) with two looking-glasses in his hand, on the backs of which was written—THIS FOR THE BODY ; THIS FOR THE MIND. "Would you like," said he, "to look into these glasses ?" I assented, and the first he held up was that for the body. I looked in ; but oh, such a face ! I never saw myself so before. It seemed to me that the most miserable old hag that was ever bent down by age and infirmity in a poor-house, was an angel to me ; and yet I thought that the expression of the face was worse than the face itself. But when he came to present the other glass, no metaphors can paint, no language express, the forms of darkness and deformity I saw assembled in my own breast. I then knew for the first time what Young[380] means when he says—

> "Heaven spares all beings but itself,
> That most revolting sight—a naked human heart."

Then I saw Envy, in the shape of an enormous serpent, curling around my heart, the venom oozing from his mouth ; Rage, in the shape of a vulture, tearing my soul ; Ingratitude to heaven, in the shape of a swine ; all my little low arts, in the shape of a fox ; every reptile of every name was there, and every corner of the mansion was polluted. I felt as if a ray of self-knowledge was now shot into my

[380] Edward Young (1683-1765) English poet known for his dramatic monologue *Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1742-1745).

soul, and the sight filled me with despair. I never felt such a shuddering at toad, asp, crocodile, lizard, snake, scorpion, as I now felt at myself. "Divide me from myself" said I ; "separate my consciousness from my memory, or I am undone for ever." I thought that my piercing cries filled the whole garden, and the celestials came around me in a circle, all standing and weeping, with inexpressible pity in their faces, but looking as if they knew not how to help me. At length I saw at a distance, under a tree, a man of middle stature, serene and melancholy in his aspect, with his hair parted on his forehead, covered with a white mantle, and holding a branch of a tree in his hand, he approached me ; his step was slow and majestic ; I noticed the scar of some previous wound in his hands and feet. He fixed his eye upon me, but his look was melting but very terrible. I fell at his feet and said— "O thou wonderful one, restore me to life once more ; let me once more have the privilege of probation, and I will try to move to the passion which I now see beaming from thy eye and pictured on thy brow." He laid his finger on my head and said— "The dead cannot return ; *but*——" There was an awful emphasis on the monosyllable *but*. But what ? The agitation awoke me, and I found the robin, which used to cheer my sister in her sickness, singing on the cherry-tree before my window.

I arose, and felt for the first time a gleam of gratitude that I had been restored from death when I had madly attempted to throw my life away. Opening my sister's bible, I happened to light on that passage in which the penitent woman is represented as washing the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head.[381] I was excessively affected ; I read and wept. Never had I shed such tears before. Tears of rage and resentment were familiar to me, but it was the first time I had ever shed the tears of grief. I felt as if my heart was melted, and I could pour it out like water. I sat weeping for an hour with emotion that no words could utter. At last the thought came into my mind that I ought to pray, but I knew not how ; the very attempt seemed to me impiety and presumption. At last, after many sobs and ineffectual solutions, I knelt by my chair, and said— *God be merciful to me a sinner*. 'Twas all I could say. I arose and walked my chamber for two hours with clasped hands, and it seemed to me I could walk there for ever, I never wished to see a human be-

381 Mary Magdalene, who was the first redeemed sinner to see Christ after his Resurrection.

ing again. "No, vain world !" said I, "I will shun thy temptations, I will never mingle in thy circles again." At length a new thought started in my mind ; "I will go down," said I, "and meet my parents with smiles ; I will, if possible, never utter another peevish or malignant word ; I will from this moment dedicate myself to the business of making every body around me as happy as possible. I will forget myself—what am I ? a little bubble on the boundless ocean ; and whether I sparkle in the sun or sink into the waters, it matters not. A right heart is all." I went to my glass, and thought I saw an expression that I never saw before.

It was now nearly noon, and I met my father and mother at the dinner table ; I spoke to them with the tenderest voice I could. After dinner I took hold of the first household affairs that occurred at hand. I even went to help the servants in the kitchen. After we had *cleared up* as the saying is, I went up to my chamber, and took all my fine clothes (for I had hitherto been very dressy), and packed them up in several bundles, and made it my business every day to go and distribute one of them in the negro families about town. I took my costly ring, and went to a jeweller's and sold it, and the avails I gave to the poor Irish family in which my sister was so interested. My father was a very close man, but to me he would always impart his money. I took it only to distribute it to the sons and daughters of need. Every day I took some walk of usefulness. Of certain people to whom I never thought of speaking before, I now kindly inquired after their health, and that of their fathers, brothers, uncles, and cousins. I returned the smiles of all who would condescend to smile on me, and was willing to visit every creature who would receive my company. If I heard of objects of distress, I immediately flew to relieve them. I was very fond of watching with the sick. Formerly to be broken of a night's rest, except it were for a ball or a party, threw me into a fit of the spleen for a week ; but now these occasions hardly could come too often. In short, I filled my mind with so many objects that I utterly forgot myself. I can truly say, that from one month's end to the other, the thought never entered my mind whether I was witty or handsome, or accomplished or the reverse. I was a cypher in creation, and no calamity could make me less.

One fault I fell into at first, which I afterwards rectified. I had been so excessively fond of dress that I thought I could not go too far

to the opposite extreme, and I began to dress like a fright—to wear the coarsest materials, and to put them on in a negligent manner ; insomuch that some malicious people began to say that Miss Catharine was aiming at the same object by an opposite road. She wants to be distinguished. I soon, however, altered my mode. I dressed as plain as possible, kept the middle of the fashion, and am now so fortunate as to escape notice.

My father was now growing old, and was very much broken by trouble and by age ; and although during the days of my peevishness he had treated me with the utmost indulgence, (alas ! he almost spoiled me by his kindness,) he now became peevish in his turn. It was impossible to please him. I seemed to see myself pictured in him. I knew what it was to be displeased in ourselves, and vent our displeasure on some innocent object ; to feel the wound, and impute it to the wrong arrow. Indeed, some charity is due to the unhappy ; for if vice in its influence rankles in our hearts and produces misery —misery, in its turn, operates by a reciprocal causation, and produces vice.

I resolved never to return to my father's fretfulness one impertinent word. He had taken a fancy never to eat any thing but what was cooked by my hands, and yet I scarcely could please him by my cookery. One day I prepared his dish six times, and almost received his execrations for not accomplishing impossibilities. Once, as I was kneeling to put on his slippers on his gouty feet, I happened to hurt him, and he kicked me almost across the room. Often has he warned me to leave the house—threatened to disinherit me. But I resolved that his impatient temper should be the monitor to mine. Since the remarkable morning, I have never answered him with a passionate reply.

I was now an only child, with a prospect of being rich, unless my father should, in a fit of spleen, disinherit me. But as this was not very likely, I had now several offers of marriage. They were real ones ; but whether it was love or money that brought my bumble adorers at my feet, I could not doubt for a moment when I looked in my looking-glass or my father's money bags. I was never handsome ; I was now passing over thirty, and Time never repairs the injuries of nature in a woman's face. Sometimes I confess my vanity would almost get the better of my prudence, and suggest that possibly it

might be love which brought my admirers around me. But when I saw them languishing and yet shrinking, longing to rush to my arms and yet starting back from me as if I were a wild beast, I could not doubt as to the motive. Yet I was very patient with human nature. I dallied with no man's passions, though it might be gold that inspired it.

Yet sometimes I could not help laughing to see the ridiculous figure which some of my *disinterested* admirers would make. There was a young lawyer in New Haven, an ambitious fellow, who wished to rise in the world, about ten years younger than myself. He had already offered himself to one old widow in Stamford,[382] and a rich girl, half a fool, in New-York ; and now he brought his tender addresses to me. He once acted his part most abominably, and pretended to be dreadfully in love. Among other things, the simpleton had the presumption to praise my beauty, and ask me to let him have my portrait in miniature, with a lock of my hair, which he promised to wear in his bosom. I pretended to agree, and told him he must first give me his picture ; I took it, and inclosing it in a very beautiful case of gold which I had, returned it to him with this inscription :—

> "The shell is yours ; O wear it in your breast,
> And kiss the picture, which you love the best."

But why should I sport with the follies of human nature ? let me rather sorrow for my own.

Within a few years my father and mother have died ; and I am left with a handsome property. An orphan girl, whom I took from her mother's death-bed, is my constant companion. I spend my time, like Dorcas of old,[383] in making garments for the poor, and visiting them. I bear malice and ill-will to nothing under heaven, except my own former character ; *that* I perfectly hate. I always spend one day every year in fasting rigorously, and that is the anniversary of my sister's death. Then I weep and pray for twenty-four hours in succession, without food or sleep. I have long since forgiven all my enemies, and am determined never to speak another malicious word ; and though I cannot say I am perfectly happy, (that would be too much for a wo-

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382 A city in Connecticut, founded in 1641, on Long Island Sound.

383 A Christian woman, raised from the dead by St. Peter, who made clothes for the poor.

man past thirty, with such a face as mine,) yet I have ceased to be miserable. I am most happy when I most forget myself.

One thing I would not omit. One evening, as I was walking home alone, (for a woman of my face and age need not fear to walk by night alone,) I happened to be behind two gentlemen who were talking about me. I had too much female curiosity not to listen. "What a change," says one ; "she is now really an agreeable woman." "Yes," said the other, "and I'll be hanged if the change has not reached to her face. She is now almost handsome." "No," said the first, "she is not handsome ; she looks less like the devil than she used to." Such are the eulogies on poor Catharine.