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INSTINCT

"Instinct is a great matter," quoth Falstaff, when called upon to find out a device, a "starting-hole," to hide himself from the open and apparent shame of having run away from the fight and hacked his sword like a handsaw with his own dagger. Like a valiant lion, he would not turn upon the true prince, but ran away upon instinct. Although the peculiar circumstances of the occasion upon which the subject was presented to Falstaff's mind were not very favorable to a calm consideration of it, he was undoubtedly correct in saying that instinct is a great matter. "If, then, the tree may be known by the fruit," says Falstaff, "as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff"; and it is proper that his authority should be quoted, even upon a question of metaphysical science.

That psychological endowment of animals which we denominate instinct has in every age been a matter full of wonder; and men of thought have found few more interesting subjects of inquiry. But it is confessed that little has been satisfactorily made out concerning the nature and limitations of instinct. In former times the habits and mental characteristics of those orders of animated being which are inferior to man were observed with but a careless eye; and it was late before the phenomena of animal life received a careful and reverent examination. It is vain to inquire what instinct is, before there has been an accurate observation of its manifestations. It is only from its outward manifestations that we can know anything of that marvellous inward nature which is given to animals. We cannot know anything of the essential constitution of mind, but can know only its properties. This is all we know even of matter. "If material existence," says Sir William Hamilton, "could exhibit ten thousand phenomena, and if we possessed ten thousand senses to apprehend these ten thousand phenomena of material existence, of existence absolutely and in itself we should be then as ignorant as we are at present." But this limitation of human knowledge has not always been kept in view. Men have been solicitous to penetrate into the higher mysteries of absolute and essential existence. But in thus reaching out after the unattainable, we have often passed by the only knowledge which it was possible for us to gain. Much vague speculation concerning instinct has arisen from the attempt to resolve the problem of its ultimate nature; and perhaps much more might have been made out with certainty about it, if no greater task had been attempted than to classify the phenomena which it exhibits and determine the nature of its manifestations. In regard to instinct, as well as everything else, we must be content with finding out what it seems to us to be, rather than what it is. Even with this limitation, the inquiry will prove sufficiently difficult. The properties of instinct are a little more inscrutable than those of the human mind, inasmuch as we have our own consciousness to assist us in this case, while we are left to infer the peculiarities of instinct from its outward manifestations only. And moreover, the inquiry involves an understanding of the workings of the human mind; for it is only when viewed in contrast with the rational endowments of man that the character of instinct is best known. All other questions connected with the subject are subordinate to this one of the apparent difference between instinct and reason.

Many definitions have been given of instinctive actions. These differ widely in their extent, and are for the most part quite inadequate. Some writers have ranged under this term all those customary

habits and actions which are common to all the individuals of a species. According to this definition, almost every action of animated life is instinctive. But the general idea of an instinctive action is much more restricted; it is one that is performed without instruction and prior to experience,—and not for the immediate gratification of the agent, but only as the means for the attainment of some ulterior end. To apply the term instinct to the regular and involuntary movements of the bodily organs, such as the beating of the heart and the action of the organs of respiration, is manifestly an extension of the ordinary acceptation of the term. Organic actions of a similar character are also performed by plants, and are purely mechanical. "In the lowest and simplest class of excited movements," says Müller, "the nervous system would not appear to be concerned. They result from stimuli directly applied to the muscles, which immediately excite their contractility; and they are evidently of the same character with the motions of plants." Thus, the heart is excited to pulsation by the direct contact of the blood with the muscle. The hand of a sleeping child closes upon any object which gently touches the palm. And it is in this way, doubtless, that the Sea Anemone entraps its prey, or anything else that may come in contact with its tentacles. But so far are these movements from indicating of themselves the action of any instinctive principle, that they are no proof of animality; for a precisely analogous power is possessed by the sensitive plant known as the Fly-Trap of Venus (*Dionoea muscipula*): "any insect touching the sensitive hairs on the surface of its leaf instantly causes the leaf to shut up and enclose the insect, as in a trap; nor is this all; a mucilaginous secretion acts like a gastric juice on the captive, digests it, and renders it assimilable by the plant, which thus feeds on the victim, as the Actinea feeds on the Annelid or Crustacean it may entrap." In the animal organization a large class of reflex actions are excited, not by a direct influence, but indirectly by the agency of the nerves and spinal cord. Such actions are essentially independent of the brain; for they occur in animals which have no brain, and in those whose brain has been removed. However marvellous these functions of organic life may be, there is nothing in them at all resembling that agency properly called instinct, which may be said to take the place in the inferior tribes of reason in man. To refer these operations to the same source as the wonderful instinct that guides the bird in its long migratory flight, or in the construction of its nest, would be to make the bird a curiously constructed machine which is operated by impressions from without upon its sentient nerves.

Those actions have sometimes been called instinctive which arise from the appetites and passions; and they have been referred to instinct, doubtless, because they have one characteristic of instinct,—that they are not acquired by experience or instruction. "But they differ," says Professor Bowen, "at least in one important respect from those instincts of the lower animals which are usually contrasted with human reason. The objects towards which they are directed are prized for their own sake; they are sought as *ends*; while instinct teaches brutes to do many things which are needed only as means for the attainment of some ulterior purpose." When the butterfly extracts the nectar from the flowers which she loves most, she meets a want of her physical nature which demands satisfaction at the moment; but when, in opposition to her appetite, she proceeds to the flowerless shrub to deposit her eggs upon the leaves best suited to support her unthought-of progeny, she is not influenced by any desire for the immediate gratification of her senses, but is led to the act by some dim impulse, in order that an ultimate object may be provided for to which she has no reference at the time. We are surprised to find it declared, in the very interesting "Psychological Inquiries" of Sir B.C. Brodie, that the desire for food is the simplest form of an instinct, and that such an instinct goes far towards explaining others which are more complicated. It is true that the appetites and passions of animals have an ultimate object, but they are impelled to action by a desire for immediate gratification only; but when we speak of an instinct, we mean something more than a mere want or desire,—we have chiefly in view the end beyond the blind instrumentality by which it is reached.

When we watch the movements of a young bee, as it first goes forth from its waxen cradle, we are forced to recognize an influence at work which is unlike reason, and which is neither appetite nor any mechanical principle of organic life. Rising upon the comb, and holding steadily with its tiny

feet, with admirable adroitness the young bee smooths its wings for its first flight, and rubs its body with its fore legs and antennae; then walking along the comb to the mouth of the hive, it mounts into the air, flies forth into the fields, alights upon the proper flowers, extracts their juices, collects their pollen, and, kneading it into little balls, deposits them in the sacks upon its feet; and then returning to its hive, it delivers up the honey and the wax and the bread which it has gathered and elaborated. In the hive it works the wax with its paws and feelers into an hexagonal cell with a rhomboidal bottom, the three plates of which form such angles with each other as require the least wax and space in the construction of the cell. All these complex operations the bee performs as adroitly, on the first morning of its life, as the most experienced workman in the hive. The tyro gatherer sought the flowery fields upon untried wings, and returned to its home from this first expedition with unerring flight by the most direct course through the trackless air.

This is one instance of that great class of actions which are allowed on all hands to be strictly instinctive. In the fact, that the occult faculties which urge the bee to make honey and construct geometrical cells are in complete development when it first emerges from its cell, we recognize one of the most striking characteristics of instinct,—its existence prior to all experience or instruction. The insect tribes furnish us with many instances in which the young being never sees its parents, and therefore all possibility of its profiting from their instructions or of its imitating their actions is cut off. The solitary wasp, for example, is accustomed to construct a tunnelled nest in which she deposits her eggs and then brings a number of living caterpillars and places them in a hole which she has made above each egg; being very careful to furnish just caterpillars enough to maintain the young worm from the time of its exclusion from the egg till it can provide for itself, and to place them so as to be readily accessible the moment food is required. But what is most curious of all is the fact that the wasp does not deposit the caterpillars unhurt, for thus they would disturb or perhaps destroy the young; nor does she sting them to death, for thus they would soon be in no state of proper preservation; but, as if understanding these contingencies, she inflicts a disabling wound. Yet the wasp does not feed upon caterpillars herself, nor has she ever seen a wasp provide them for her future offspring. She has never seen a worm such as will spring from her egg, nor can she know that her egg will produce a worm; and besides, she herself will be dead long before the unknown worm can be in existence. Therefore she works blindly; without knowing that her work is to subserve any useful purpose, she works to a purpose both definite and important; and her acts are uniform with those of all solitary wasps that have lived before her or that will live after her; so that we are compelled to refer these untaught actions to some constant impulse connected with the special organization of the wasp,—an innate tact, uniform throughout the species, of which we, not possessing anything of the kind, can form only a poor conception, but which we call instinct.

There have been some philosophers, however, who have exercised their ingenuity in tracing so-called instinctive actions to the operation of experience. The celebrated Doctor Erasmus Darwin gave, as an illustration of this view, his opinion that the young of animals know how to swallow from their experience of swallowing *in utero*. Without going into any refutation of this position, we would only remark, in passing, that the act of swallowing is not an instinctive action at all, but a purely mechanical one. Would not Doctor Darwin have rejoiced greatly, if he could have brought to the support of his theory the observation of our own great naturalist, Agassiz, who, knowing the savage snap of one of the large, full-grown Testudinata, is said to have asserted, that, under the microscope, he has seen the juvenile turtle snapping precociously *in embryo*?

But not only is instinct prior to all experience, it is even superior to it, and often leads animals to disregard it,—the spontaneous impulse which Nature has given them being their best guide. The carrier-pigeon or the bird of passage, taken a long distance from home by a circuitous route, trusting to this "pilot-sense," flies back in a straight course; and the hound takes the shortest way home through fields where he has never previously set foot.

The existence of instinct prior to all experience or instruction, and its perfection in the beginning, render cultivation and improvement not only unnecessary, but impossible. As it is with the individual, so it is with the race. One generation of the irrational tribes does not improve upon the preceding or educate its successor. The web which you watched the spider weaving in your open window last summer, carefully measuring off each radius of her wheel and each circular mesh by one of her legs, was just such a web as the spider wove of old when she was pronounced to be "little upon the earth, yet exceeding wise."

This incapacity for education is what so widely separates instinct from the rational powers of man. Man gathers knowledge and transmits it from generation to generation. He is not born with a ready skill, but with a capacity for it. His mind is formed destitute of all connate knowledge, that it may acquire the knowledge of all things. "Man's imperfection at his nativity is his perfection; while the perfection of brutes at their nativity is their imperfection." No rational being has ever arrived at such perfection that he cannot still improve; he can travel on from one attainment to another in a perpetual progress of improvement. He is, moreover, free to choose his own path of action; while the being of instinct is governed by a power which is not subject to his will, and which confines him to a narrow path which he cannot leave. But instinct, within its narrow limits, in many cases quite transcends reason in its achievements.

> "Man's attainments in his own concerns,
> Matched with the expertness of the brutes in theirs,
> Are ofttimes vanquished and thrown far behind."

Perhaps man has never made a structure as perfect in all its adaptations as the honeycomb. Yet when Virgil spoke of the belief that bees have a portion of the mind divine, nothing was known of the wonderful mathematical properties of this beautiful fabric; and the demonstration of them which has been made within the present century is beyond the comprehension of far the larger part of mankind. If the bee comprehended the problem which it has been working out for these many ages before man was able to solve it, would its intellectual powers be inferior to his in degree, if they were the same in kind? The water-spider weaves for herself a cocoon, makes it impervious to water, and fastens it by loose threads to the leaves of plants growing at the bottom of a still pool. She carries down air in a bag made for this purpose, till the water is expelled from the cell through the opening below. The spider lived quite dry in her little air-chamber beneath the water ages before the diving-bell was invented; but that she understood anything of the doctrines of space and gravity, no one would venture to assert.

It has been the belief of some philosophers, and poets as well, that man has taken the hint for some of the arts he now practises from the brute creation. Democritus represents him as having derived the arts of weaving and sewing from the spider, and the art of building of tempered clay from the swallow; and we also read in Pliny's "Natural History," that the nest of the swallow suggested to Toxius, the son of Coelus, the invention of mortar. According to Lucretius, men learned music from the song of birds, and Pope describes them as learning from the mole to plough, from the nautilus to sail, and from bees and ants to form a political community. Perhaps we were behind the beaver in felling timber, in leading dams across rivers, and in building cabin villages,—behind the wasp in making paper, and behind the squirrel and spider in crossing streams upon rafts. So, if man had needed any example of war and violence and wrong, he had only to go to the ant-hill and see the red ants invade the camps of the black and bear off their little negro prisoners into slavery.

Whatever truth there may be in these ideas, it is at least conceivable that man may have profited from the example of these animals. He has copied from patterns set by Nature in tree and leaf and flower and plant; he has formed the Gothic arch and column from the trunks and interlacing boughs of the lofty avenue, the Corinthian capital from the acanthus foliage embracing a basket, and classic urns and vases from flowers. But no one could describe one species of the brute world as having

derived a similar lesson from another, and much less from trees and plants. No species of animals has learnt anything new even from man, except within the narrow sphere of domestication.

It is only in particulars that instinct appears superior to reason in the works it achieves. When an animal is taken, ever so little, out of the ordinary circumstances in which its instincts act, it is apt to behave very foolishly. If a woodpecker's egg is hatched by a bird which builds an open nest upon the branches of a tree, when the young bird is grown large enough to shuffle about in the nest, induced by its instinct to suppose that its nest is in a hole walled round on all sides by the tree, with a long, narrow entrance down from above, it does not see that it has been inducted into the open nest of another bird, and is sure to tumble out. The bee and the ant, in a few particulars, show wonderful sagacity; but remove them from the narrow compass of their instincts, and all their wisdom is at an end. That animals are so wise in a few things and so wanting in wisdom in all others shows that they are endowed with a mental principle essentially of a different nature from that of the human race. "They do many things even better than ourselves," says Descartes; "but this does not prove them to be endowed with reason, for this would prove them to have more reason than we have, and that they should excel us in all other things also"; for reason can act not only in one direction, but in all.

But it will be said that instinct is not invariable,—that it often displays a capacity of accommodating itself, like reason, to circumstances, and is therefore a principle the same in kind with it,—or else that the animal has something of the rational faculty superadded to the instinctive. But does the animal make these variations in its conduct from a true perception of their meaning and purpose?

It is very natural for us to ascribe to reason those actions of other animals which would be ascribable to reason, if performed by man. "If," says Keller, (an old German writer,) "the fly be enabled to choose the place which suits her best for the deposition of her eggs, (as, for instance, in my sugar-basin, in which I placed a quantity of decaying wheat,) she takes a correct survey of every part and selects that in which she believes her ova will be the best preserved and her young ones well cared for." The fly, in this instance, apparently exercises an intelligent choice; but does any one doubt that the selection she makes is determined wholly by a blind, uncalculating instinct? The beaver selects a site for his dam at a place where the depth, width, and rapidity of the stream are most fit. There is a tree upon the bank, and food and materials for his work in the vicinity. If a man should attempt to build a beaver's dam, he would abstractly consider all these elements of fitness. The outward manifestations of the quality of abstraction are equally observable in either case. But we must not hastily conclude, because the beaver in one instance acts in a manner apparently reasonable, that he has any reason of his own; for, when we come to study the habits of this animal, we find that he displays all the characteristics of the instinctive principle. If animals are endowed with instincts which apparently act so much like reason in the ordinary course of their operations, we should not at once conclude that there is any need of endowing them with a modicum of reason to account for their deviations from this course, which do not outwardly resemble the acts of reason any more strongly. And besides, it is said, that, if we refer the variations to an intelligent principle, we must refer the ordinary conduct to the same principle. To use an old illustration,—if a bird is reasonable and intelligent, when, on perceiving the swollen waters of the stream approach her half-finished nest, she builds higher up the bank, she was intelligent while making her first nest, and was always intelligent; for how otherwise, it is asked, could she know when to lay down instinct and take up reason?

Instinct aims at certain definite ends; but these ends cannot always be reached by the same means, especially when places and circumstances are not the same. Accommodation is necessary, or it could not always produce the effects for which it is intended. Would the instinct of the spider be complete, if, after it has guided her to spin a web so neat and trim and regular, it did not also lead her to repair her broken snare, when the cords have been sundered by the struggles of some powerful captive? But this pliancy of the spider's instinct is no more remarkable than the contingent operation of the instincts of many species of animals. "It is remarkable," says Kirby, "that many of the insects

which are occasionally observed to emigrate are not usually social animals, but seem to congregate, like swallows, merely for the purpose of emigration." When certain rare emergencies occur, which render it necessary for the insects to migrate, a contingent instinct develops itself, and renders an unsocial species gregarious.

It is probable that most of our domesticated species, exhibiting as they do in that condition attainments foreign to their natural habits and faculties in a wild state, were endowed with provisional instincts with a view to their association with man. But generally the docility of animals does not extend to attainments which are radically different from their habits and faculties in a wild state. Casual acquirements, which have no relation to their exigencies in their natural condition, never become hereditary, and are not, therefore, instinctive. A young pointer-dog, which has never been in the fields before, will not only point at a covey of partridges, but will remain motionless, like a well-trained dog. The fact that the sagacity of the pointer is hereditary shows that it is the development of an instinctive propensity; for simple knowledge is not transmitted by blood from one generation to another. We have heard of a pig that pointed game, and of another that was learned in letters; but we ascertain in every such instance that their foreign acquirements do not reappear in their progeny, but end with the pupils of the time being. The pig's peculiarity of pointing did not arise from the development of a provisional instinct, because it does not become hereditary; but the same act in the pointer-dog is instinctive,—for, when once brought out by associating with man, it has remained with the breed, being a part of the animal's nature, which existed in embryo till it was developed by a companionship with man, for whose use this faculty was alone intended.

Although the animals which especially display these exceptional or contingent instincts are those which are fitted for the use and comfort of man and may be domesticated, it is doubtless true that many other species are in some degree provided with them, and that they thus have a plasticity in their nature which enables them to exercise, under particular circumstances, unlooked-for attention, foresight, and caution. And besides, it is only in analogy with the laws of the physical world that instinct should admit of a slightly diversified application.

It is to be noticed in this connection that many animals are gifted with a wonderful sensibility of the senses,—the action of which is sometimes mistaken not only for the action of instinct, but for that of reason also. The acuteness of the sense of smell in the dog, which enables him to trace the steps of his master for miles through crowded streets by the infinitesimal odor which his footsteps left upon the pavement, is quite beyond our conception. Equally incomprehensible to us are the keenness of sight and wide range of vision of the eagle, which enable him to discover the rabbit nipping the clover amid the thick grass at a distance at which a like object would be to us altogether imperceptible. The chameleon is enabled to seize the little insects upon which it feeds by darting forth its wonderfully constructed tongue with such rapidity and with such delicacy of perception that "wonder-loving sages" have told us that it feeds upon the air.

It has been the belief of some observers that some animals have senses by which they are enabled to take cognizance of things which are not revealed directly to our senses. It is easy enough to conceive of beings endowed with a more perfect perception of the external world, both in its condition and the number of objects it presents, than we have, by means of other organs of outward perception. Voltaire, in one of his philosophical romances, represents an inhabitant of one of the planets of the Dog-Star as inquiring of the Secretary of the Academy of Sciences in the planet of Saturn, at which he had recently arrived in a journey through the heavens, how many senses the men of his globe had; and when the Academician answered, that they had seventy-two, and were every day complaining of the smallness of the number, he of the Dog-Star replied, that in his globe they had very near one thousand senses, and yet with all these they felt continually a sort of listless inquietude and vague desire which told them how very imperfect they were. But we shall not travel so far as this for our illustrations. We have all seen in the fields and about our houses birds and insects which seem to take cognizance of the electric state of the atmosphere; and we have learnt to feel quite sure, when, early

in the morning of a summer's day, we see fresh piles of sand around the holes of the ants, that a storm is approaching, although the sky may as yet be cloudless and the air perfectly serene. In like manner birds perceive the approach of rain, and are all busy oiling and smoothing their feathers in preparation for it; and then, before the clouds break away, they come out from their retreats and joyfully hail the return of fair weather. So, by some analogous sense, the birds of passage are informed of the approach of winter and the return of spring.

It is doubtless true that in some animals the senses are immediately connected with instincts which assist and extend their operation. Metaphysicians and physiologists are agreed that the perception of distance is an acquired knowledge. The sense of sight by itself principally makes us conversant with extension only. The painting upon the retina of the eye presents all external things with flat surfaces and at the same distance. Before we can have any correct ideas of distance, we must be able to compare the result of the sense of sight with the result of the sense of feeling. By experience we in time come to judge something of distance by the size of the image which an object makes upon the retina, but more by our acquired knowledge of the form and color of external things. It is true that the eyes of many animals are constructed like those of man; but they do not learn to judge of distance by the same slow process. It is known from experiment that some animals have a perfect conception of distance at the moment of their birth; and the young of the greater part of animals possess some instinctive perception of this kind. "A flycatcher, for example, just come out of its shell, has been seen to peck at an insect with an aim as perfect as if it had been all its life engaged in learning the art." And so when the hen takes her chickens out into the field for the first time to feed, they seem to perceive very distinctly the relative distance of all objects about them, and will run by the straightest course when she calls them to pick up the little grains which she points out to them. Without this instinctive power of determining the relative distance and figure of objects, the young of most animals would perish before their sense of sight could be perfected, as ours is, by experience.

We have now noticed the chief characteristics of instinct: its existence prior to all experience or instruction; its incapacity of improvement, except within the narrow sphere of domestication; its limitation to a few objects, and the certainty of its action within these limits; the distinctness and permanence of its character for each species; and its constant hereditary nature. In regard to the uniformity of instinct throughout each species, it may be further remarked, that this seems to be very constantly preserved in the lowest divisions of the animal kingdom. Among the Articulates, also, instinct appears almost unvarying; and it is in this department among the insect tribes that the most striking manifestations of instinct are to be met with. When we arrive among the higher orders of the Vertebrates, we find in some species that each individual is capable of some modification of its actions, according to the particular circumstances in which it finds itself placed. But throughout the long series of animals, from the polype to man, there is instinctive action more or less in amount in every species, with, perhaps, the exception of man alone. The variety of that endowment, which is adapted to definite objects, means, and results, in each particular one of the five hundred thousand species estimated to be now living, may well call forth our admiration and astonishment at the magnitude and extent of the prospective contrivance of the Creator. How various the relations of all these animals to each other and to the inanimate world about them! and yet how admirable the adjustments of that immaterial principle which regulates their lives, so as to secure the well-being of each and the symmetry of the general plan!

There has been much diversity of opinion as to the existence of instincts in the human species, —some making the whole mind of man nothing but a bundle of instincts, and others wholly denying him any endowment of this nature, while others still have given him a complex mental nature, and have, moreover, declared that intellect and instinct in him are so interwoven that it is impossible to tell where the one begins and the other ends. But we believe, with the author of "Ancient Metaphysics," that in Nature, however intimately things are blended together and run into each other like different shades of the same color, the species of things are absolutely distinct, and that there are certain fixed

boundaries which separate them, however difficult it may be for us to find them out. In regard to intelligence and instinct, the two principles seem to us to be not more distinctly and widely separated in their nature than in the provinces of their operation.

Sir Henry Holland, who believes that intelligence and instinct are blended in man, admits that instincts, properly so called, form the *minimum* in relation to reason, and are difficult of definition from their connection with his higher mental functions, but that, wherever we can truly distinguish them, they are the same in principle and manner of operation as those of other animals. He makes one distinction, however, between the instincts of man and those of lower animals,—that in the former they have more of individual character, are far less numerous and definite in relation to the physical conditions of life, and more various and extensive in regard to his moral nature. But, on the other hand, Sir B.C. Brodie seems to be of opinion that the majority of instincts belonging to man resemble those of the inferior animals, inasmuch as they relate to the preservation of the individual and the continuation of the species; and that when man first began to exist, and for some generations afterwards, the range of his instincts was much more extensive than it is at the present time. When authorities so eminent as these differ so widely upon the question, to what human instincts relate, we see at least that it is very difficult to define and distinguish these instincts, and we may be led to doubt their existence at all. Of that marvellous endowment which guides the bee to fabricate its cells according to laws of the most rigid mathematical exactness, and guides the swallow in its long flight to its winter home, we agree with Professor Bowen, that there is no trace whatever in human nature. The actions of man which have been loosely described as instinctive belong for the most part to those classes of actions which we have already shown to be in no proper sense of the word instinctive, that is, those concerned in the appetites and in the functions of organic life. There are also numerous automatic and habitual actions which are liable to be mistaken for instincts. Some have included in the category of instincts those intuitive perceptions and primary beliefs which are a part of our constitution, and are the foundation of all our knowledge. But these propensities of thought and feeling are of a higher nature than mere instincts; they are immutable laws of the human mind, which time and physical changes cannot reach: they do not seem to depend upon the physical organization, but to be inherent in the soul itself. If these are instincts, then, why are not all the ways in which the mind exerts itself instincts also, and reason itself an instinct?

There is hardly any human action, feeling, or belief, which has not been ranged under the term instinct. Hunger and thirst have been called instincts; so have the faculty of speech, the use of the right hand in preference to the left, the love of society, the desire to possess property, the desire to avoid danger and prolong life, and the belief in supernatural agencies, upon which is engrafted the religious sentiment. We cannot, in this paper, attempt to analyze these and many other similar examples which have been given as illustrations of instinct in treatises of high repute, and show that they do not at all come within that class of actions which we contrast with reason. In regard to those actions of early infancy which have often been adduced as illustrations of instinct, the physiologists of the present day are agreed that they are as mechanical as the act of breathing. To place these upon the same level with the complex and wonderful operations of the bee, the ant, and the beaver, is to admit that the instincts of the latter are merely reflex actions following impressions on the nerves of sense.

On the other hand, whether the animals inferior to man ever exercise any conscious process of reasoning is a question which has often been discussed, and upon which there is no general agreement. Instances of the remarkable sagacity of some domesticated animals are often adduced as proofs of reasoning on their part. Some of these wonderful feats may be traced to the unconscious faculty of imitation, which even in man often appears as a blind propensity, although he exercises an active and rational imitation as well. Sometimes the mere association of ideas, or the perception by animals that one thing is accompanied by another or that one event follows another, is mistaken for that higher principle which in man judges, reflects, and understands causes and effects. When the dog sees his master take down his gun, his blandishments show that he anticipates a renewal of the pleasures

of the chase. He does not reflect upon past pleasures; but, seeing the gun in his master's hand, a confused idea of the feelings that were associated with the gun in times past is called up. So the ox and the horse learn to associate certain movements with the voice and gesture of man. And so a fish, about the most stupid of all animals, comes to a certain spot at a certain signal to be fed. These combinations are quite elementary. This is quite another thing from that reciprocal action of ideas on each other by which man perceives the relations of things, understands the laws of cause and effect, and not only forms judgments of the past, but draws conclusions which are laws for the future. We find in the brute no power of attending to and arranging its thoughts,—no power of calling up the past at will and reflecting upon it. The animal has the faculty of memory, and, when this is awakened, the object remembered may be accompanied by a train or attendance of accessory notions which have been connected with the object in the animal's past experience. But it never seems to be able to exercise the purely voluntary act of recollection. It is not capable of comparing one thing with another, so far as we can judge. If the animal could exercise any true act of comparison, there would be no limit to the exercise of it, and the animal would be an intelligent being; for the result of a simple act of comparison is judgment, and reasoning is only a double act of comparison. We have the authority of Sir William Hamilton for saying that the highest function of mind is nothing higher than comparison. Hence comes thought,—hence, the power of discovering truth,—and hence, the mind's highest dignity, in being able to ascend unassisted to the knowledge of a God. Those who hold that the minds of the inferior animals are essentially of the same nature with that of the human race, and differ only in degree, should reflect that the distinguishing attribute of the human mind does not admit of degrees. The faculty of comparison, in all its various applications, must be either wholly denied or else wholly attributed. Hence, Pope is not philosophical, when he applies the epithet "half-reasoning" to the elephant. "As reasoning," says Coleridge, "consists wholly in a man's power of seeing whether any two ideas which happen to be in his mind are or are not in contradiction with each other, it follows of necessity, not only that all men have reason, but that every individual has it in the same degree." We gather also from the same acute writer that in the simple determination, "black is not white," all the powers are implied that distinguish man from other animals. If, then, the brute reasoned at all, he would be a rational being, and would improve and gain knowledge by experience; and, moreover, he would be a moral agent, accountable for his conduct. "Would not the brute," asks an able writer in the "Zoölogical Journal," "take a survey of his lower powers, and would he not, as man does, either rightly use or pervert them, at his pleasure?"

It has been suggested by some one, that, by the law of merciful adaptation, which extends throughout the universe, thought would not be imprisoned and pent up forever in an intelligence wanting the power of expression. But it is also to be noticed that the want of an articulate language or a system of general signs puts it out of the power of animals to perform a single act of reasoning. The use of language to communicate wants and feelings is not peculiar to "word-dividing men," though enjoyed by them in a much higher degree than by other animals. Doubtless every species of social animals has some kind of language, however imperfect it may be. "We never watch the busy workers of the ant-hill," says Acheta Domestics, (the author of "Episodes of Insect-Life,") "stopping as they encounter and laying their heads together, without being pretty certain that they are saying to each other something quite as significant as 'Fine day.'" And when the morning wakes the choral song of the birds, they seem to be telling each other of their happiness. But though animals have a language appropriate to the expression of their sensations and emotions, they have no words, "those shadows of the soul, those living sounds." Words are symbols of thoughts, and may be considered as a revelation of the human mind. It is this use of language as an instrument of thought, as a system of general signs, which, according to Bishop Whately, distinguishes the language of man from that of the brute; and the same eminent authority declares that without such a system of general signs the reasoning process could not be conducted.

It is true, that we often see in the inferior animals manifestations of deductions of intellect similar to those of the human mind,—only that they are not made by the animals themselves, but for them and above their conscious perception. "When a bee," says Dr. Reid, "makes its combs so geometrically, the geometry is not in the bee, but in that great Geometrician who made the bee, and made all things in number, weight, and measure." Since the animal is not conscious of the intelligence and design which are manifested in its instincts, which it obeys and works out, the conscious life of the individual must be wholly a life within the senses. The senses alone can give the animal only an empirical knowledge of the world of its observation. The senses may register and report facts, but they can never arrive at an understanding of necessary truths; the source of this kind of knowledge is the rational mind, which has an active disposition to draw out these infallible laws and eternal truths from its own bosom. The main tendency of the rational mind is not towards mere phenomena, but their scientific explanation. It seeks to trace effects, as presented to us by the senses, back to the causes which produced them; or contemplating things wholly metaphysical, it seeks to follow out the laws which it has itself discovered, till they have gone through a thousand probable contingencies and lost themselves in numberless results. It is on account of this capacity and tendency of the human mind to look through fact to law, through individuals to classes, through effects to causes, through phenomena to general principles, that the late Dr. Burnap was led to declare, in a very interesting course of lectures which he delivered before the Lowell Institute a few years since, that he considered the first characteristic difference between the highest species of animals and the lowest race of man to be a capacity of science. But is not the whole edifice of human science built upon the simple faculty of comparison?

This is the ultimate analysis of all the highest manifestations of the human mind, whether of judgment, or reason, or intellect, or common sense, or the power of generalization, or the capacity of science. We have already quoted Hamilton to this effect, and we, moreover, have his authority for saying that the faculty of discovering truth, by a comparison of the notions we have obtained by observation and experience, is the attribute by which man is distinguished as a creature higher than the animals. We might also cite Leibnitz to the effect that men differ from animals in being capable of the formation of necessary judgments, and hence capable of demonstrative sciences.

But notwithstanding it seems so apparent that what is customarily called reason is the distinguishing endowment which makes man the "paragon of animals," we very often meet with attempts to set up some other distinction. We cannot here go into an examination of these various theories, or even allude to them specially. We will, however, briefly refer to a view which was recently advanced in one of our leading periodicals, inasmuch as it makes prominent a distinction which we wish to notice, although it seems to us to be only subordinate to the distinguishing attribute of the human mind which we have already pointed out. It is said that self-consciousness is what makes the great difference between man and other animals; that the latter do not separate themselves consciously from the world in which they exist; and that, though they have emotions, impulses, pains, and pleasures, every change of feeling in them takes at once the form of an outward change either in place or position. It is not intended, however, to be said that they have no conscious perception of external things. We cannot possibly conceive of an animal without this condition of consciousness. A consciousness of an outward world is an essential quality of the animal soul; this distinguishes the very lowest form of animal life from the vegetable world; and hence it cannot possibly be, as has been suggested by some, that there are any animate beings which have no endowments superior to those which belong to plants. The plant is not conscious of an outward world, when it sends out its roots to obtain the nourishment which is fitting for itself; but the polype, which is fixed with hundreds of its kind on the same coral-stock, and is able only to move its mouth and tentacles, is aware of the presence of the little craw-fish upon which it feeds, and throws out its lasso-cells and catches it. The world of which the polype has any perception is not a very large one. The outer world of a bird is vastly greater; and man knows a world without, which is immeasurably large beyond that of which

any other animal is conscious, because both his physical organs and his mental faculties bring him into far the most diversified and intimate relations with all created things. He sees in every flower of the garden and every beast of the field, in the air and in the sea, in the earth beneath his feet and in the starry heavens above him, countless meanings which are hidden to all the living world besides. To him there is a world which has existed and a world that will exist. "Man," says Protagoras, "is the measure of the universe." But he has a greater dignity in being able to apprehend the world of thought within. "Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm or little world," says Sir Thomas Browne, "I find myself something more than the great." Man can make himself an object to himself and gain the deepest insight into the workings of his own mind. This internal perception seems never to be developed in other animals. We have already observed that they have no thought of their own. The intelligence and design which they often manifest in their actions are not the workings of their own minds. The intelligence and design belong to Him who impressed the thought upon the animal's mind and unceasingly sustains it in action. They themselves are not conscious of any thought, but only of "certain dim imperious influences" which urge them on. They are conscious of feelings and desires and impulses. We could not conceive of the existence of these affections in animals without their having an immediate knowledge of them. Even "the function of voluntary motion," says Hamilton, "which is a function of the animal soul in the Peripatetic doctrine, ought not, as is generally done, to be excluded from the phenomena of consciousness and mind." The conscious life of the irrational tribes seems, then, to be a life almost wholly within the senses. They have nothing of that higher conscious personality which belongs to man and is an attribute of a free intellect.

A general statement of the points made out in the foregoing inquiry will more clearly show our conception of the nature and limitations of instinct. First, we limited the word instinct so as to exclude all those automatic and mechanical actions concerned in the simple functions of organic life,—as also to exclude the operations of the passions and appetites, since these seek no other end than their own gratification. Then it was shown that instinct exists prior to all experience or memory; that it comes to an instant or speedy perfection, and is not capable of any improvement or cultivation; that its objects are precise and limited; that within its proper sphere it often appears as the highest wisdom, but beyond this is only foolishness; that it uses complex and laborious means to provide for the future, without any prescience of it; that it performs important and rational operations which the animal neither intends nor knows anything about; that it is permanent for each species, and is transmitted as an hereditary gift of Nature; and that the few variations in its action result from the development of provisional faculties, or from blind imitation. We were led to conclude that instinct is not a free and conscious possession of the animal itself. We found some points of resemblance between intelligence in man and instinct in other animals,—but at the same time points of dissimilarity, such as to make the two principles appear radically unlike.

This brief summary presents nearly all that we can satisfactorily make out respecting instinct; and at the same time it shows how much is still wanting to a complete solution of all the questions which it involves. And then there are higher mysteries connected with the subject, which we do not attempt to penetrate,—mysteries in regard to the creation and the maintenance of instinctive action: whether it be the result of particular external conditions acting on the organization of animals, or whether, as Sir Isaac Newton thought, the Deity himself is virtually the active and present moving principle in them;—and mysteries, too, about the future of the brute world: whether, as Southey wrote,

> "There is another world
> For all that live and move,—a better world."

If we ever find a path which seems about to lead us up to these mysteries, it speedily closes against us, and leaves us without any rational hope of attaining their solution.

MY OWN STORY

"Oh, tell her, brief is life, but love is long."

"What have I got that you would like to have? Your letters are tied up and directed to you. Mother will give them to you, when she finds them in my desk. I could execute my last will myself, if it were not for giving her additional pain. I will leave everything for her to do except this: take these letters, and when I am dead, give them to Frank. There is not a reproach in them, and they are full of wit; but he won't laugh, when he reads them again. Choose now, what will you have of mine?"

"Well," I said, "give me the gold pen-holder that Redmond sent you after he went away."

Laura rose up in her bed, and seized me by my shoulder, and shook me, crying between her teeth, "You love him! you love him!" Then she fell back on her pillow. "Oh, if he were here now! He went, I say, to marry the woman he was engaged to before he saw you. He was nearly mad, though, when he went. The night mother gave them their last party, when you wore your black lace dress, and had pink roses in your hair, somehow I hardly knew you that night. I was in the little parlor, looking at the flowers on the mantelpiece, when Redmond came into the room, and, rushing up to me, bent down and whispered, 'Did you see her go? I shall see her no more; she is walking on the beach with Maurice.' He sighed so loud that I felt embarrassed; for I was afraid that Harry Lothrop, who was laughing and talking in a corner with two or three men, would hear him; but he was not aware that they were there. I did not know what to do, unless I ridiculed him. 'Follow them,' I said. 'Step on her flounces, and Maurice will have a chance to humiliate you with some of his cutting, exquisite politeness.' He never answered a word, and I would not look at him, but presently I understood that there were tears falling. Oh, you need not look towards me with such longing; he does not cry for you now. They seemed to bring him to his senses. He stamped his foot; but the carpet was thick; it only made a thud. Then he buttoned his coat, giving himself a violent twist as he did it, and looked at me with such a haughty composure, that, if I had been you, I should have trembled in my shoes. He walked across the room toward the group of men.—'Ah, Harry,' he said, 'where is Maurice?' 'Don't you know?' they all cried out; 'he has gone as Miss Denham's escort?' 'By Jove!' said Harry Lothrop,—'Miss Denham was as handsome as Cleopatra, to-night. Little Maurice is now singing to her. Did he take his guitar under his arm? It was here; for I saw a green bag near his hat, when we came in to-night.' Just then we heard the twang of a guitar under the window, and Redmond, in spite of himself, could not help a grimace.—Is it not a droll world?" said Laura, after a pause; "things come about so contrariwise."

She laughed such a shrill laugh, that I shuddered to hear it, and I fell a-crying. "But," she continued, "I am going, I trust, where a key will be given me for this cipher."

Tears came into her eyes, and an expression of gentleness filled her face.

"It is strange," she said, "when I know that I must die, that I should be so moved by earthly passions and so interested in earthly speculations. My heart supplicates God for peace and patience, and at the same moment my thoughts float away in dreams of the past. I shall soon be wiser; I am convinced of that. The doctrine of compensation extends beyond this world; if it be not so, why should I die at twenty, with all this mysterious suffering of soul? You must not wonder over me, when I am gone, and ask yourself, 'Why did she live?' Believe that I shall know why I lived, and let it suffice you and encourage you to go on bravely. Live and make your powers felt. Your nature is affluent, and you may yet learn how to be happy."

She sighed softly, and turned her face to the wall, and moved her fingers as sick people do. She waited for me to cease weeping: my tears rained over my face so that I could neither see nor speak.

After I had become calmer, she moved toward me again and took my hand: her own trembled.

"It is for the last time, Margaret. My good, skilful father gives me no medicine now. My sisters have come home; they sit about the house like mourners, with idle hands, and do not speak with each other. It is terrible, but it will soon be over."

She pulled at my hand for me to rise. I staggered up, and met her eyes.

Mine were dry now.

"Do not come here again. It will be enough for my family to look at my coffin. I feel better to think you will be spared the pain."

I nodded.

"Good-bye!"

A sob broke in her throat.

"Margaret,"—she spoke like a little child,—"I am going to heaven."

I kissed her, but I was blind and dumb. I lifted her half out of the bed. She clasped her frail arms round me, and hid her face in my bosom.

"Oh, I love you!" she said.

Her heart gave such a violent plunge, that I felt it, and laid her back quickly. She waved her hand to me with a determined smile. I reached the door, still looking at her, crossed the dark threshold, and passed out of the house. The bold sunshine smote my face, and the insolent wind played about me. The whole earth was as brilliant and joyous as if it had never been furrowed by graves.

Laura lived some days after my interview with her. She sent me no message, and I did not go to see her. From the garret-windows of our house, which was half a mile distant from Laura's, I could see the windows of the room where she was lying. Three tall poplar-trees intervened in the landscape. I thought they stood motionless so that they might not intercept my view while I watched the house of death. One morning I saw that the blinds had been thrown back and the windows opened. I knew then that Laura was dead.

The day after the funeral I gave Frank his letters, his miniature, and the locket which held a ring of his hair.

"Is there a fire?" he asked, when I gave them to him; "I want to burn these things."

I went to another room with him.

"I'll leave everything here to-day; and may I never see this cursed place again! Did she die, do you know, because I held her promise that she would be my wife?"

He threw the papers into the grate, and crowded them down with his boot, and watched them till the last blackened flake disappeared. He then took from his neck a hair chain, and threw that into the fire also.

"It is all done now," he said.

He shook my hand with a firm grasp and left me.

A month later Laura's mother sent me a package containing two bundles of letters. It startled me to see that the direction was dated before she was taken ill:—"To be given to Margaret in case of my death. June 5th, 1848." They were my letters, and those which she had received from Harry Lothrop. On this envelop was written, "Put these into the black box he gave you." The gold pen-holder came into my hands also. *Departure* was engraved on the handle, and Laura's initials were cut in an emerald in its top. The black box was an ebony, gold-plated toy, which Harry Lothrop had given me at the same time Redmond gave Laura the pen-holder. It was when they went away, after a whole summer's visit in our little town, the year before. I locked the letters in the black box, and,

"Whether from reason or from impulse only,"

I know not, but I was prompted to write a line to Harry Lothrop. "Do not," I said, "write Laura any more letters. Those you have already written to her are in my keeping, for she is dead. Was it not a pleasant summer we passed together? The second autumn is already at hand: time flies the same, whether we are dull or gay. For all this period what remains except the poor harvest of a few letters?"

I received in answer an incoherent and agitated letter. What was the matter with Laura? he asked. He had not heard from her for months. Had any rupture occurred between her and her friend Frank? Did I suppose she was ever unhappy? He was shocked at the news, and said he must come and learn the particulars of the event. He thanked me for my note, and begged me to believe how sincere was his friendship for my poor friend.

"Redmond," he continued, "is, for the present, attached to the engineer corps to which I belong, and he has offered to take charge of my business while I am a day or two absent. He is in my room at this moment, holding your note in his hand, and appears painfully disturbed."

It was now a little past the time of year when Redmond and Harry Lothrop had left us,—early autumn. After their departure, Laura and I had been sentimental enough to talk over the events of their visit. Recalling these associations, we created an illusion of pleasure which of course could not last. Harry Lothrop wrote to Laura, but the correspondence declined and died. As time passed on, we talked less and less of our visitors, and finally ceased to speak of them. Neither of us knew or suspected the other of any deep or lasting feeling toward the two friends. Laura knew Redmond better than I did; at least, she saw him oftener; in fact, she knew both in a different way. They had visited her alone; while I had met them almost entirely in society. I never found so much time to spare as she seemed to have; for everybody liked her, and everybody sought her. As often as we had talked over our acquaintance, she was wary of speaking of Redmond. Her last conversation with me revealed her thoughts, and awakened feelings which I thought I had buffeted down. The tone of Harry Lothrop's note perplexed me, and I found myself drifting back into an old state of mind I had reason to dread.

As I said, the autumn had come round. Its quiet days, its sombre nights, filled my soul with melancholy. The lonesome moan of the sea and the waiting stillness of the woods were just the same a year ago; but Laura was dead, and Nature grieved me. Yet none of us are in one mood long, and at this very time there were intervals when I found something delicious in life, either in myself or the atmosphere.

"Moreover, something is or seems
That touches me with mystic gleams."

A golden morning, a starry night, the azure round of the sky, the undulating horizon of sea, the blue haze which rose and fell over the distant hills, the freshness of youth, the power of beauty,—all gave me deep voluptuous dreams.

I can afford to confess that I possessed beauty; for half my faults and miseries arose from the fact of my being beautiful. I was not vain, but as conscious of my beauty as I was of that of a flower, and sometimes it intoxicated me. For, in spite of the comforting novels of the Jane Eyre school, it is hardly possible to set an undue value upon beauty; it defies ennui.

As I expected, Harry Lothrop came to see me. The sad remembrance of Laura's death prevented any ceremony between us; we met as old acquaintances, of course, although we had never conversed together half an hour without interruption. I began with the theme of Laura's illness and death, and the relation which she had held toward me. All at once I discovered, without evidence, that he was indifferent to what I was saying; but I talked on mechanically, and like a phantasm the truth came to my mind. The real man was there,—not the one I had carelessly looked at and known through Laura.

I became silent.

He twisted his fingers in the fringe of my scarf, which had fallen off, and I watched them.

"Why," I abruptly asked, "have I not known you before?"

He let go the fringe, and folded his hands, and in a dreamy voice replied,—

"Redmond admires you."

"What a pity!" I said. "And you,—you admire me, or yourself, just now; which?"

He flushed slightly, but continued with a bland voice, which irritated and interested me.

"All that time I was so near you, and you scarcely saw me; what a chance I had to study you! Your friend was intelligent and sympathetic, so we struck a league of friendship: I could dare so much with her, because I knew that she was engaged to marry Mr. Ballard. I own that I have been troubled about her since I went away. How odd it is that I am here alone with you in this room! how many times I have wished it! I liked you best here; and while absent, the remembrance of it has been inseparable from the remembrance of you,—a picture within a picture. I know all that the room contains,—the white vases, and the wire baskets, with pots of Egyptian lilies and damask roses, the books bound in green and gold, the engravings of nymphs and fauns, the crimson bars in the carpet, the flowers on the cushions, and, best of all, the arched window and its low seat. But I had promised myself never to see you: it was all I could do for Laura. She is dead, and I am here."

I rose and walked to the window, and looked out on the misty sea, and felt strangely.

"Another lover," I thought,—"and Redmond's friend, and Laura's. But it all belongs to the comedy we play."

He came to where I stood.

"I know you so well," he said,—"your pride, your self-control, even your foibles: but they attract one, too. You did not escape heart-whole from Redmond's influence. He is not married yet, but he will be; he is a chivalrous fellow. It was a desperate matter between you two,—a hand-to-hand struggle. It is over with you both, I believe: you are something alike. Now may I offer you my friendship? If I love you, let me say so. Do not resist me. I appeal to the spirit of coquetry which tempted you before you saw me to-night. You are dressed to please me."

I was thinking what I should say, when he skilfully turned the conversation into an ordinary channel. He shook off his dreamy manner, and talked with his old vivacity. I was charmed a little; an association added to the charm, I fancy. It was late at night when he took his leave. He had arranged it all; for a man brought his carriage to the door and drove him to the next town, where he had procured it to come over from the railway.

When I was shut in my room for the night, rage took possession of me. I tore off my dress, twisted my hair with vehemence, and hurried to bed and tried to go to sleep, but could not, of course. As when we press our eyelids together for meditation or sleep, violet rings and changing rays of light flash and fade before the darkened eyeballs, so in the dark unrest of my mind the past flashed up, and this is what I saw:—

The county ball, where Laura and I first met Redmond, Harry Lothrop, and Maurice. We were struggling through the crowd of girls at the dressing-room door, to rejoin Frank, who was waiting for us. As we passed out, satisfied with the mutual inspection of our dresses of white silk, which were trimmed with bunches of rose-geranium, we saw a group of strangers close by us, buttoning their gloves, looking at their boots, and comparing looks. Laura pushed her fan against my arm; we looked at each other, and made signs behind Frank, and were caught in the act, not only by him, but by a tall gentleman in the group which she had signalled me to notice.

The shadow of a smile was travelling over his face as I caught his eye, but he turned away so suddenly that I had no opportunity for embarrassment. An usher gave us a place near the band, at the head of the hall.

"Do not be reckless, Laura," I said,—"at least till the music gives you an excuse."

"You are obliged to me, you know," she answered, "for directing your attention to such attractive prey. Being in bonds myself, I can only use my eyes for you: don't be ungrateful."

The band struck up a crashing polka, and she and Frank whirled away, with a hundred others. I found a seat and amused myself by contrasting the imperturbable countenances of the musicians with those of the dancers. The perfumes the women wore floated by me. These odors, the rhythmic motion of the dancers, and the hard, energetic music exhilarated me. The music ended, and the crowd began to buzz. The loud, inarticulate speech of a brilliant crowd is like good wine. As my acquaintances

gathered about me, I began to feel its electricity, and grew blithe and vivacious. Presently I saw one of the ushers speaking to Frank, who went down the hall with him.

"Oh, my prophetic soul!" said Laura, "they are coming."

Frank came back with the three, and introduced them. Redmond asked me for the first quadrille, and Harry Lothrop engaged Laura. Frank said to me behind his handkerchief,—"It's *en règle*; I know where they came from; their fathers are brave, and their mothers are virtuous."

The quadrille had not commenced, so I talked with several persons near; but I felt a constraint, for I knew I was closely observed by the stranger, who was entirely quiet. Curiosity made me impatient for the dance to begin; and when we took our places, I was cool enough to examine him. Tall, slender, and swarthy, with a delicate moustache over a pair of thin scarlet lips, penetrating eyes, and a tranquil air. My antipodes in looks, for I was short and fair; my hair was straight and black like his, but my eyes were blue, and my mouth wide and full.

"What an unnaturally pleasant thing a ball-room is!" he said,—"before the dust rises and the lights flare, I mean. But nobody ever leaves early; as the freshness vanishes, the extravagance deepens. Did you ever notice how much faster the musicians play as it grows late? When we open the windows, the fresh breath of the night increases the delirium within. I have seen the quietest women toss their faded bouquets out of the windows without a thought of making a comparison between the flowers and themselves."

"My poor geraniums!" I said,—"what eloquence!"

He laughed, and answered,—

"My friend Maurice yonder would have said it twice as well."

We were in the promenade then, and stopped where the said Maurice was fanning himself against the wall.

"May I venture to ask you for a waltz, Miss Denham? it is the next dance on the card," said Maurice;—"but of course you are engaged."

I gave him my card, and he began to mark it, when Redmond took it, and placed his own initials against the dance after supper, and the last one on the list. He left me then, and I saw him a moment after talking with Laura.

We passed a gay night. When Laura and I equipped for our ten miles' ride, it was four in the morning. Redmond helped Frank to pack us in the carriage, and we rewarded him with a knot of faded leaves.

"This late event," said Laura, with a ministerial air, after we had started, "was a providential one. You, my dear Frank, were at liberty to pursue your favorite pastime of whist, in some remote apartment, without being conscience-torn respecting me. I have danced very well without you, thanks to the strangers. And you, Margaret, have had an unusual opportunity of displaying your latent forces. Three such different men! But let us drive fast. I am in want of the cup of tea which mother will have waiting for me."

We arrived first at my door. As I was going up the steps, Laura broke the silence; for neither of us had spoken since her remarks.

"By the way, they are coming here to stay awhile. They are anxious for some deep-sea fishing. They'll have it, I think."

I heard Frank's laugh of delight at Laura's wit, as the carriage drove off.

It was our last ball that season.

It was late in the spring; and when Redmond came with his two friends and settled at the hotel in our town, it was early summer. When I saw them again, they came with Laura and Frank to pay me a visit. Laura was already acquainted with them, and asked me if I did not perceive her superiority in the fact.

"Let us arrange," said Harry Lothrop, "some systematic plan of amusement by sea and land. I have a pair of horses, Maurice owns a guitar, and Redmond's boat will be here in a few days. Jones,

our landlord, has two horses that are tolerable under the saddle. Let us ride, sail, and be serenaded. The Lake House, Jones again, is eight miles distant. This is Monday; shall we go there on horse-back Wednesday?"

Laura looked mournfully at Frank, who replied to her look,—

"You must go; I cannot; I shall go back to business to-morrow."

I glanced at Redmond; he was contemplating a portrait of myself at the age of fourteen.

"Shall we go?" Laura asked him.

"Nothing, thank you," he answered.

We all laughed, and Harry Lothrop said,—

"Redmond, my boy, how fond you are of pictures!"

Redmond, with an unmoved face, said,—

"Don't be absurd about my absent-mindedness. What were you saying?"

And he turned to me.

"Do you like our plan," I asked, "of going to the Lake House? There is a deep pond, a fine wood, a bridge,—perch, pickerel,—a one-story inn with a veranda,—ham and eggs, stewed quince, elderberry wine,—and a romantic road to ride over."

"I like it."

Frank opened a discussion on fishing; Laura and I withdrew, and went to the window-seat.

"I am light-hearted," I said.

"It is my duty to be melancholy," she replied; "but I shall not mope after Frank has gone."

"'After them the deluge,'" said I. "How long will they stay?"

"Till they are bored, I fancy."

"Oh, they are going; we must leave our recess."

Frank and she remained; the others bid us good-night.

"I shall not come again till Christmas," he said. "These college-chaps will amuse you and make the time pass; they are young,—quite suitable companions for you girls. *Vive la bagatelle!*"

He sighed, and, drawing Laura's arm in his, rose to go. She groaned loudly, and he nipped her ears.

"Good-bye, Margaret; let Laura take care of you. There is a deal of wisdom in her."

We shook hands, Laura moaning all the while, and they went home.

Frank and Laura had been engaged three years. He was about thirty, and was still too poor to marry.

Wednesday proved pleasant. We had an early dinner, and our cavalcade started from Laura's. I rode my small bay horse Folly, a gift from my absentee brother. His coat was sleeker than satin; his ears moved perpetually, and his wide nostrils were always in a quiver. He was not entirely safe, for now and then he jumped unexpectedly; but I had ridden him a year without accident, and felt enough acquainted with him not to be afraid.

Redmond eyed him.

"You are a bold rider," he said.

"No," I answered,—"a careful one. Look at the bit, and my whip, too. I cut his hind legs when he jumps. Observe that I do not wear a long skirt. I can slip off the saddle, if need be, without danger."

"That's all very well; but his eyes are vicious; he will serve you a trick some day."

"When he does, I'll sell him for a cart-horse."

Laura and Redmond rode Jones's horses. Harry Lothrop was mounted on his horse Black, a superb, thick-maned creature, with a cluster of white stars on one of his shoulders. Maurice rode a wall-eyed pony. Our friends Dickenson and Jack Parker drove two young ladies in a carriage,—all the saddle-horses our town could boast of being in use. We were in high spirits, and rode fast. I was occupied in watching Folly, who had not been out for several days. At last, tired of tugging at his mouth, I gave him rein, and he flew along. I tucked the edge of my skirt under the saddle-flap,

slanted forward, and held the bridle with both hands close to his head. A long sandy reach of road lay before me. I enjoyed Folly's fierce trotting; but, as I expected, the good horse Black was on my track, while the rest of the party were far behind. He soon overtook me. Folly snorted when he heard Black's step. We pulled up, and the two horses began to sidle and prance, and throw up their heads so that we could not indulge in a bit of conversation.

"Brute!" said Harry Lothrop,—"if I were sure of getting on again, I would dismount and thrash you awfully."

"Remember Pickwick," I said; "don't do it."

I had hardly spoken, when the strap of his cap broke, and it fell from his head to the ground. I laughed, and so did he.

"I can hold your horse while you dismount for it."

I stopped Folly, and he forced Black near enough for me to seize the rein and twist it round my hand; when I had done so, Folly turned his head, and was tempted to take Black's mane in his teeth; Black felt it, reared, and came down with his nose in my lap. I could not loose my hands, which confused me, but I saw Harry Lothrop making a great leap. Both horses were running now, and he was lying across the saddle, trying to free my hand. It was over in an instant. He got his seat, and the horses were checked.

"Good God!" he said, "your fingers are crushed."

He pulled off my glove, and turned pale when he saw my purple hand.

"It is nothing," I said.

But I was miserably fatigued, and prayed that the Lake House might come in sight. We were near the wood, which extended to it, and I was wondering if we should ever reach it, when he said,—

"You must dismount, and rest under the first tree. We will wait there for the rest of the party to come up."

I did so. Numerous were the inquiries, when they reached us. Laura, when she heard the story, declared she now believed in Ellen Pickering. Redmond gave me a searching look, and asked me if the one-story inn had good beds.

"I can take a nap, if necessary," I answered, "in one of Mrs. Sampson's rush-bottomed chairs on the veranda. The croak of the frogs in the pond and the buzz of the bluebottles shall be my lullaby."

"No matter how, if you will rest," he said, and assisted me to remount.

We rode quietly together the rest of the way. After arriving, we girls went by ourselves into one of Mrs. Sampson's sloping chambers, where there was a low bedstead, and a thick feather-bed covered with a patchwork-quilt of the "Job's Trouble" pattern, a small, dim looking-glass surmounted by a bunch of "sparrow-grass," and an unpainted floor ornamented with home-made rugs which were embroidered with pink flower-pots containing worsted rose-bushes, the stalks, leaves, and flowers all in bright yellow. We hung up our riding-skirts on ancient wooden pegs, for we had worn others underneath them suitable for walking, and then tilted the wooden chairs at a comfortable angle against the wall, put our feet on the rounds, and felt at peace with all mankind.

"Alas!" I said, "it is too early for currant-pies."

"I saw," said one of the girls, "Mrs. Sampson poking the oven, and a smell of pies was in the air."

"Let us go into the kitchen," exclaimed Laura.

The proposal was agreeable; so we went, and found Mrs. Sampson making plum-cake.

"The pies are green-gooseberry-pies," whispered Laura,—"very good, too."

"Miss Denham," shrieked Mrs. Sampson, "you haven't done growing yet.—How's your mother and your grandmother?—Have you had a revival in your church?—I heard of the young men down to Jones's,—our minister's wife knows their fathers,—first-rate men, she says.—I thought you would be here with them.—'Sampson,' I said this morning, as soon as I dressed, 'do pick some gooseberries. I'll have before sundown twenty pies in this house.' There they are,—six gooseberry, six custard, and,

though it's late for them, six mince, and two awful great pigeon pies. It's poor trash, I expect; I'm afraid you can't eat it; but it is as good as anybody's, I suppose."

We told her we should devour it all, but must first catch some fish; and we joined the gentlemen on the veranda. A boat was ready for us. Laura, however, refused to go in it. It was too small; it was wet; she wanted to walk on the bridge; she could watch us from that; she wanted some flowers, too. Like many who are not afraid of the ocean, she held ponds and lakes in abhorrence, and fear kept her from going with us. Harry Lothrop offered to stay with her, and take lines to fish from the bridge. She assented, and, after we pushed off, they strolled away.

The lake was as smooth and white as silver beneath the afternoon sun and a windless sky; it was bordered with a mound of green bushes, beyond which stretched deep pine woods. There was no shade, and we soon grew weary. Jack Parker caught all the fish, which flopped about our feet. A little way down, where the lake narrowed, we saw Laura and Harry Lothrop hanging over the bridge.

"They must be interested in conversation," I thought; "he has not lifted his line out of the water once."

Redmond, too, looked over that way often, and at last said,—

"We will row up to the bridge, and walk back to the house, if you, Maurice, will take the boat to the little pier again."

"Oh, yes," said Maurice.

We came to the bridge, and Laura reached out her hand to me.

"Why, dear!" she exclaimed, "you have burnt your face. Why did you," turning to Redmond, "paddle about so long in the hot sun?"

Her words were light enough, but the tone of her voice was savage. Redmond looked surprised; he waved his hand deprecatingly, but said nothing. We went up toward the house, but Laura lingered behind, and did not come in till we were ready to go to supper.

It was past sundown when we rose from the ruins of Mrs. Sampson's pies. We voted not to start for home till the evening was advanced, so that we might enjoy the gloom of the pine wood. We sat on the veranda and heard the sounds of approaching night. The atmosphere was like powdered gold. Swallows fluttered in the air, delaying to drop into their nests, and chirped their evening song. We heard the plunge of the little turtles in the lake, and the noisy crows as they flew home over the distant tree-tops. They grew dark, and the sky deepened slowly into a soft gray. A gentle wind arose, and wafted us the sighs of the pines and their resinous odors. I was happy, but Laura was unaccountably silent.

"What is it, Laura?" I asked, in a whisper.

"Nothing, Margaret,—only it seems to me that we mortals are always riding or fishing, eating or drinking, and that we never get to living. To tell you the truth, the pies were too sour. Come, we must go," she said aloud.

Redmond himself brought Folly from the stable.

"We will ride home together," he said. "My calm nag will suit yours better than Black. Why does your hand tremble?"

He saw my shaking hands, as I took the rein; the fact was, my wrists were nearly broken.

"Nothing shall happen to-night, I assure you," he continued, while he tightened Folly's girth.

He contrived to be busy till all the party had disappeared down a turn of the road. As he was mounting his horse, Mrs. Sampson, who was on the steps, whispered to me,—

"He's a beautiful young man, now!"

He heard her; he had the ear of a wild animal; he took off his hat to Mrs. Sampson, and we rode slowly away.

As soon as we were in the wood, Redmond tied the bridles of the horses together with his handkerchief. It was so dark that my sight could not separate him from his horse. They moved beside me, a vague, black shape. The horses' feet fell without noise in the cool, moist sand. If our companions

were near us, we could not see them, and we did not hear them. Horses generally keep an even pace, when travelling at night,—subdued by the darkness, perhaps,—and Folly went along without swaying an inch. I dropped the rein on his neck, and took hold of the pommel. My hand fell on Redmond's. Before I could take it away, he had clasped it, and touched it with his lips. The movement was so sudden that I half lost my balance, but the horses stepped evenly together. He threw his arm round me, and recoiled from me as if he had received a blow.

"Take up your rein," he said, with a strange voice,—"quick!—we must ride fast out of this."

I made no reply, for I was trying to untie the handkerchief. The knot was too firm.

"No, no," he said, when he perceived what I was doing, "let it be so."

"Untie it, Sir!"

"I will not."

I put my face down between the horses' necks and bit it apart, and thrust it into my bosom.

"Now," I said, "shall we ride fast?"

He shook his rein, and we rode fiercely,—past our party, who shouted at us,—through the wood,—over the brow of the great hill, from whose top we saw the dark, motionless sea,—through the long street,—and through my father's gateway into the stable-yard, where I leaped from my horse, and, bridle in hand, said, "Good night!" in a loud voice.

Redmond swung his hat and galloped off.

Early next morning, Laura sent me a note:—

"DEAR MARGARET,—I have an ague, and mean to have it till Sunday night. The pines did it. Did you bring home any needles? On Monday, mother will give one of her whist-parties. I shall add a dozen or two of our set; you will come.

"P.S. What do you think of Mr. Harry Lothrop? Good young man, eh?"

I was glad that Laura had shut herself up for a few days; I dreaded to see her just now. I suffered from an inexplicable feeling of pride and disappointment, and did not care to have her discover it. Laura, like myself, sometimes chose to protect herself against neighborly invasions. We never kept our doors locked in the country; the sending in of a card was an unknown process there. Our acquaintances walked in upon us whenever the whim took them, and it now and then happened to be an inconvenience to us who loved an occasional fit of solitude. I determined to keep in-doors for a few days also. Whenever I was in an unquiet mood, I took to industry; so that day I set about arranging my drawers, making over my ribbons, and turning my room upside down. I rehung all my pictures, and moved my bottles and boxes. Then I mended my stockings, and marked my clothes, which was not a necessary piece of work, as I never left home. I next attacked the parlor,—washed all the vases, changed the places of the furniture, and distressed my mother very much. When evening came, I brushed my hair a good deal, and looked at my hands, and went to bed early. I could not read then, though I often took books from the shelves, and I would not think.

Sunday came round. The church-bells made me lonesome. I looked out of the window many times that day, and, fixing on the sash one of my father's ship-glasses, swept the sea, and peered at the islands on the other side of the bay, gazing through their openings, beyond which I could see the great dim ocean. Mother came home from church, and said young Maurice was there, and inquired about me. He hoped I did not take cold; his friend Redmond had been hoarse ever since our ride, and had passed most of the time in his own room, drumming on the window-pane and whistling dirges. Mother dropped her acute eyes on me, while she was telling me this; but I yawned all expression from my face.

As Monday night drew near, my numbness of feeling began to pass off; thought came into my brain by plunges. Now I desired; now I hoped. I dressed myself in black silk, and wore a cape of black Chantilly lace. I made my hair as glossy as possible, drew it down on my face, and put round my head a band composed of minute sticks of coral. When all was done, I took the candle and held it above my head and surveyed myself in the glass. I was very pale. The pupils of my eyes were dilated,

as if I had received some impression that would not pass away. My lips had the redness of youth; their color was deepened by my paleness.

"How handsome I am!" I thought, as I set down the candle.

When I entered Laura's parlor, she came toward me and said,—

"Artful creature! you knew well, this warm night, that every girl of us would wear a light dress; so you wore a black one. How well you understand such matters! You are very clever; your real sensibility adds effect to your cleverness. I see how it is. Come into this corner. Have you got a fan? Good gracious! black, with gold spangles;—where *do* you buy your things? I can tell you now," she continued, "my conversation on the bridge the other day."

She hesitated, and asked me if I liked her new muslin. She did look well in it; it was a white fabric, with red rose-buds scattered over it. Her delicate face was shadowed by light brown curls. She was attractive, and I told her so, and she began again:—

"Harry Lothrop said, as he was impaling the half of a worm,—

"'Redmond is a handsome fellow, is he not?'

"'He is too awfully thin,' I answered, 'but his eyes are good.'

"He gave me a crafty side-look, like that of a parrot, when he means to bite your finger.

"'Your friend, too,' he added, 'is really one of the most beautiful girls I ever saw,—a coquette with a heart.'

"'Let down your line into the water,' I said.

"He laughed a little laugh. By-the-by, there is an insidious tenacity about Mr. Harry Lothrop which irritates me; but I like him, for I think he understands women. I feel at ease with him, when he is not throwing out his tenacious feelers. Then he said,—

"'Redmond is engaged to his cousin. The girl's mother had the charge of him through his boyhood. He is ardently attached to her,—the mother, I mean. She is most anxious to call Redmond her son.'

"'Didn't you have a bite?' I said.

"'Well, I think the bait is off the hook,' he answered; and then we were silent and pondered the water.

"There are some people I must speak to,"—and Laura moved away without looking at me.

I opened my fan, but felt chilly. A bustle near me caused me to raise my eyes; Redmond was speaking to a lady. He was in black, too, and very pale. He turned toward me and our eyes met. His expression agitated me so that I unconsciously rose to my feet and warned him off with my fan; but he seemed rooted to the spot. Laura took care of us both; she came and stood between us. I saw her look at him so sweetly and so mournfully, that he understood her in a moment. He shook his head and walked abruptly into another room. Laura went again from me without giving me a look. Maurice came up and I made room for him beside me. We talked of the riding-party, and then of our first meeting at the ball. He told me that Redmond's boat had arrived, and what a famous boat it was, and "what jolly sprees we fellows had, cruising about with her." I asked him about his guitar, and when we might hear him play. He grew more chatty and began to tell me about his sister, when Redmond and Harry Lothrop came over to us, which ended his chat.

The party was like all parties,—dull at first, and brighter as it grew late. The old ladies played whist in one room, and the younger part of the company were in another. Champagne was not a prevalent drink in our village, but it happened that we had some that night.

"It may be a sinful beverage," said an old lady near me, "but it is good."

Redmond opened a bottle for me, we clinked glasses, and drank to an indefinite, silent wish.

"One more," he asked, "and let us change glasses."

Presently a cloud of delicate warmth spread over my brain, and gave me courage to seek and meet his glance. There must have been an expression of irresolution in my face, for he looked at me inquiringly, and then his own face grew very sad. I felt awkward from my intuition of his opinion of

my mood, when he relieved me by saying something about Shelley,—a copy of whose poems lay on a table near. From Shelley he went to his boat, and said he hoped to have some pleasant excursions with Laura and myself. He "would go at once and talk with Laura's mother about them." I watched him through the door, while he spoke to her. She was in a low chair, and he leaned his face on one hand close to hers. I saw that his natural expression was one of tranquillity and courage. He was not more than twenty-two, but the firmness of the lines about his mouth belied his youth.

"He has a wonderful face," I thought, "and just as wonderful a will."

I felt my own will rise as I looked at him,—a will that should make me mistress of myself, powerful enough to contend with, and resist, or turn to advantage any controlling fate which might come near me.

"Do you feel like singing?" Harry Lothrop inquired. "Do you know

Byron's song, 'One struggle more and I am free'?"

"Oh, yes!" I replied,—"it is set to music which suits my voice. I will sing it."

Laura had been playing polkas with great spirit. Since the Champagne, the old ladies had closed their games of whist for talking, and, as it was nearly time to go, the company was gay. There was laughing and talking when I began, but silence soon after, for the wine made my voice husky and effective. I sang as if deeply moved.

"Lord!" I heard Maurice say to Laura, as I rose from the piano, "what a girl! she's really tragic."

I caught Harry Lothrop's eye, as I passed through the door to go up-stairs; it was burning; I felt as if a hot coal had dropped on me. Maurice ran into the hall and sprang upon the stair-railing to ask me if he might be my escort home. That night he serenaded me. He was a good-hearted, cheerful creature; conceited, as small men are apt to be,—conceit answering for size with them,—but pleasantly so, and I learned to like him as much as Redmond did.

The summer days were passing. We had all sorts of parties,—parties in houses and out-of-doors; we rode and sailed and walked. Laura walked and talked much with Harry Lothrop. We did not often see each other alone, but, when we met, were more serious and affectionate with each other. We did not speak, except in a general way, of Redmond and Harry Lothrop. I did not avoid Redmond, nor did I seek him. We had many a serious conversation in public, as well as many a gay one; but I had never met him alone since the night we rode through the pines.

He went away for a fortnight. On the day of his return he came to see me. He looked so glad, when I entered the room, that I could not help feeling a wild thrill. I went up to him, but said nothing. He held out both his hands. I retreated. An angry feeling rushed into my heart.

"No," I said, "Whose hand did you hold last?"

He turned deadly pale.

"That of the woman I am going to marry."

I smiled to hide the trembling of my lips, and offered my hand to him; *but he waved it away*, and fell back on his chair, hurriedly drawing his handkerchief across his face. I saw that he was very faint, and stood against the door, waiting for him to recover.

"More than I have played the woman and the fool before you."

"Yes."

"I thought so. You seem experienced."

"I am."

"Forgive me," he said, gently; "being only a man, I think you can. Good

God!" he exclaimed, "what an infernal self-possession you show!"

"Redmond, is it not time to end this? The summer has been a long one,—has it not?—long enough for me to have learned what it is to live. Our positions are reversed since we have become acquainted. I am for the first time forgetting self, and you for the first time remember self. Redmond, you are a noble man. You have a steadfast soul. Do not be shaken. I am not like you; I am not simple or single-hearted. But I imitate you. Now come, I beg you will go."

"Certainly, I will. I have little to say."

August had nearly gone when Maurice told me they were about to leave.

Laura said we must prepare for retrospection and the fall sewing.

"Well," I said, "the future looks gloomy, and I must have some new dresses."

Maurice came to see me one morning in a state of excitement to say we were all going to Bird Island to spend the day, dine at the light-house, and sail home by moonlight. Fifteen of the party were going down by the sloop Sapphire, and Redmond had begged him to ask if Laura and I would go in his boat.

"Do go," said Maurice; "it will be our last excursion together; next week we are off. I am broken-hearted about it. I shall never be so happy again. I have actually whimpered once or twice. You should hear Redmond whistle nowadays. Harry pulls his moustache and laughs his oily laughs, but he is sorry to go, and kicks his clothes about awfully. By the way, he is going down in the sloop because Miss Fairfax is going,—he says,—that tall young lady with crinkled hair;—he hates her, and hopes to see her sick. May I come for you in the morning, by ten o'clock? Redmond will be waiting on the wharf."

"Tell Redmond," I answered, "that I will go; and will you ask Harry

Lothrop not to engage himself for all the reels to Miss Fairfax?"

He promised to fulfil my message, and went off in high spirits. I wondered, as I saw him going down the walk, why it was that I felt so much more natural and friendly with him than with either of his friends. I often talked confidentially to him; he knew how I loved my mother, and how I admired my father, and I told him all about my brother's business. He also knew what I liked best to eat and to wear. In return, he confided his family secrets to me. I knew his tastes and wishes. There was no common ground where I met Redmond and Harry Lothrop. There were too many topics between Redmond and myself to be avoided, for us to venture upon private or familiar conversation. Harry Lothrop was an accomplished, fastidious man of the world, I dreaded boring him, and so I said little. He was several years older than Redmond, and possessed more knowledge of men, women, and books. Redmond had no acquirements, he knew enough by nature, and I never saw a person with more fascination of manner and voice.

The evening before the sailing-party, I had a melancholy fit. I was restless, and after dark I put a shawl over my head and went out to walk. I went up a lonesome road, beyond our house. On one side I heard the water washing against the shore with regularity, as if it were breathing. On the other side were meadows, where there were cows crunching the grass. A mile farther was a low wood of oaks, through which ran a path. I determined to walk through that. The darkness and a sharp breeze which blew against me from limitless space made me feel as if I were the only human creature the elements could find to contend with, I turned down the little path into the deeper darkness of the wood, sat down on a heap of dead leaves, and began to cry.

"Mine is a miserable pride," was my thought,—"that of arming myself with beauty and talent and going through the world conquering! Girls are ignorant, till they are disappointed. The only knowledge men proffer us is the knowledge of the heart; it becomes us to profit by it. Redmond will marry that girl. He must, and shall. I will empty the dust and ashes of my heart as soon as the fire goes down: that is, I think so; but I know that I do not know myself. I have two natures,—one that acts, and one that is acted upon,—and I cannot always separate the one from the other."

Something darkened the opening into the path. Two persons passed in slowly. I perceived the odor of violets, and felt that one of them must be Laura. Waiting till they passed beyond me, I rose and went home.

The next morning was cloudy, and the sea was rough with a high wind; but we were old sailors, and decided to go on our excursion. The sloop and Redmond's boat left the wharf at the same time. We expected to be several hours beating down to Bird Island, for the wind was ahead. Laura and I, muffled in cloaks, were placed on the thwarts and neglected; for Redmond and Maurice were busy with the boat. Laura was silent, and looked ill. Redmond sat at the helm, and kept the boat up to the

wind, which drove the hissing spray over us. The sloop hugged the shore, and did not feel the blast as we did. I slid along my seat to be near Redmond. He saw me coming, and put out his hand and drew me towards him, looking so kindly at me that I was melted. Trying to get at my handkerchief, which was in my dress-pocket, my cloak flew open, the wind caught it, and, as I rose to draw it closer, I nearly fell overboard. Redmond gave a spring to catch me, and the boat lost her headway. The sail flapped with a loud bang. Maurice swore, and we chopped about in the short sea.

"It is your destiny to have a scene, wherever you are," said Laura. "If I did not feel desperate, I should be frightened. But these green, crawling waves are so opaque, if we fall in, we shall not see ourselves drown."

"Courage! the boat is under way," Maurice cried out; "we are nearly there."

And rounding a little point, we saw the light-house at last. The sloop anchored a quarter of a mile from the shore, the water being shoal, and Redmond took off her party by instalments.

"What the deuse was the matter with you at one time?" asked Jack Parker. "We saw you were having a sort of convulsion. Our cap'n said you were bold chaps to be trifling with such a top-heavy boat."

"Miss Denham," said Redmond, "thought she could steer the boat as well as I could, and so the boat lost headway."

Harry Lothrop gave Redmond one of his soft smiles, and a vexed look passed over Redmond's face when he saw it.

We had to scramble over a low range of rocks to get to the shore. Redmond anchored his boat by one of them. Bird Island was a famous place for parties. It was a mile in extent. Not a creature was on it except the light-house keeper, his wife, and daughter. The gulls made their nests in its rocky borders; their shrill cries, the incessant dashing of the waves on the ledges, and the creaking of the lantern in the stone tower were all the sounds the family heard, except when they were invaded by some noisy party like ours. They were glad to see us. The light-house keeper went into the world only when it was necessary to buy stores, or when his wife and daughter wanted to pay a visit to the mainland.

The house was of stone, one story high, with thick walls. The small, deep-set windows and the low ceilings gave the rooms the air of a prison; but there was also an air of security about them: for, in looking from the narrow windows, one felt that the house was a steadfast ship in the circle of the turbulent sea, whose waves from every point seemed advancing towards it. A pale, coarse grass grew in the sand of the island. It was too feeble to resist the acrid breath of the ocean, so it shuddered perpetually, and bent landward, as if invoking the protection of its stepmother, the solid earth.

"It is perfect," said Redmond to me; "I have been looking for this spot all my life; I am ready to swear that I will never leave it."

We were sitting in a window, facing each other. He looked out toward the west, and presently was lost in thought. He folded his arms tightly across his breast, and his eyes were a hundred miles away. The sound of a fiddle in the long alley which led from the house to the tower broke his reverie.

"We shall be uproarious before we leave," I said; "we always are, when we come here."

The fun had already set in. Some of the girls had pinned up their dresses, and borrowed aprons from the light-house keeper's wife, and with scorched faces were helping her to make chowder and fry fish. Others were arranging the table, assisted by the young men, who put the dishes in the wrong places. Others were singing in the best room. One or two had brought novels along, and were reading them in corners. It was all merry and pleasant, but I felt quiet. Redmond entered into the spirit of the scene. I had never seen him so gay. He chatted with all the girls, interfering or helping, as the case might be. Maurice brought his guitar, and had a group about him at the foot of the tower-stairs. He sung loud, but his voice seemed to fluctuate;—now it rang through the tower, now it was half overpowered by the roar of the sea. His poetical temperament led him to choose songs in harmony

with the place, not to suit the company,—melancholy words set to wild, fitful chords, which rose and died away according to the skill of the player. I had gone near him, for his singing had attracted me.

"You are inspired," I said.

He nodded.

"You never sung so before."

"I feel old to-day," he answered, and he swept his hands across all the strings; "my ditties are done."

After dinner Laura asked me to go out with her. We slipped away unseen, and went to the beach, and seated ourselves on a great rock whose outer side was lapped by the water. The sun had broken through the clouds, but shone luridly, giving the sea a leaden tint. The wind was going down. We had not been there long, when Redmond joined us. He asked us to go round the island in his boat. Laura declined, and said she would sit on the rock while we went, if I chose to go. I did choose to go, and he brought the boat to the rock. He hoisted the sail half up the mast, and we sailed close to the shore. It rose gradually along the east side of the island, and terminated in a bold ledge which curved into the sea. We ran inside the curve, where the water was nearly smooth. Redmond lowered the sail and the boat drifted toward the ledge slowly. A tongue of land, covered with pale sedge, was on the left side. Above the ledge, at the right, we could see the tower of the light-house. Redmond tied down the helm, and, throwing himself beside me, leaned his head on his hand, and looked at me a long time without speaking. I listened to the water, which plashed faintly against the bows. He covered his face with his hands. I looked out seaward over the tongue of land; my heart quaked, like the grass which grew upon it. At last he rose, and I saw that he was crying,—the tears rained fast.

"My soul is dying," he said, in a stifled voice; "I am not more than mortal,—I cannot endure it."

I pointed toward the open sea, which loomed so vague in the distance.

"The future is like that,—is it not? Courage! we must drift through it; we shall find something."

He stamped his foot on the deck.

"Women always talk so; but men are different. If there is a veil before us, we must tear it away,—not sit muffled in its folds, and speculate on what is behind it. Rise."

I obeyed him. He held me firmly. We were face to face.

"Look at me."

I did. His eyes were blazing.

"Do you love me?"

"No."

He placed me on the bench, hoisted the sail, untied the helm, and we were soon ploughing round to the spot where we had left Laura; but she was gone. On the rock where she was, perched a solitary gull, which flew away with a scream as we approached.

That day was the last that I saw Redmond alone. He was at the party at Laura's house which took place the night before they left. We did not bid each other adieu.

After the three friends had gone, they sent us gifts of remembrance.

Redmond's keepsake was a white fan with forget-me-nots painted on it.

To Laura he sent the pen-holder, which was now mine.

We missed them, and should have felt their loss, had no deep feeling been involved; for they gave an impetus to our dull country life, and the whole summer had been one of excitement and pleasure. We settled by degrees into our old habits. At Christmas, Frank came. He looked worried and older. He had heard something of Laura's intimacy with Harry Lothrop, and was troubled about it, I know: but I believe Laura was silent on the matter. She was quiet and affectionate toward him during his visit, and he went back consoled.

The winter passed. Spring came and went, and we were deep into the summer when Laura was taken ill. She had had a little cough, which no one except her mother noticed. Her spirits fell, and she failed fast. When I saw her last, she had been ill some weeks, and had never felt strong enough

to talk as much as she did in that interview. She nerved herself to make the effort, and as she bade me farewell, bade farewell to life also. And now it was all over with her!

* * * * *

I fell asleep at length, and woke late. It seemed as if a year had dropped out of the procession of Time. My heart was still beating with the emotion which stirred it when Redmond and I were together last. Recollection had stung me to the quick. A terrible longing urged me to go and find him. The feeling I had when we were in the boat, face to face, thrilled my fibres again. I saw his gleaming eyes; I could have rushed through the air to meet him. But, alas! exaltation of feeling lasts only a moment; it drops us where it finds us. If it were not so, how easy to be a hero! The dull reaction of the present, like a slow avalanche, crushed and ground me into nothingness.

"Something must happen at last," I thought, "to amuse me, and make time endurable."

What can a woman do, when she knows that an epoch of feeling is rounded off, finished, dead? Go back to her story-books, her dress-making, her worsted-work? Shall she attempt to rise to mediocrity on the piano or in drawing, distribute tracts, become secretary of a Dorcas society? or shall she turn her mind to the matter of cultivating another lover at once? Few of us women have courage enough to shoulder out the corpses of what men leave in our hearts. We keep them there, and conceal the ruins in which they lie. We grow cunning and artful in our tricks, the longer we practise them. But how we palpitate and shrink and shudder, when we are alone in the dark!

After Redmond departed, I had locked up my feelings and thrown the key away. The death of Laura, and the awakening of my recollections, caused by the appearance of Harry Lothrop, wrenched the door open. Hitherto I had acted with the bravery of a girl; I must now behave with the resolution of a woman. I looked into my heart closely. No skeleton was there, but the image of a living man, —*Redmond*.

"I love him," I confessed. "To be his wife and the mother of his children is the only lot I ever care to choose. He is noble, handsome, and loyal. But I cannot belong to him, nor can he ever be mine.

> "'Of love that never found his earthly close
> What sequel?'

"What did he do with the remembrance of me? He scattered it, perhaps, with the ashes of the first cigar he smoked after he went from me,—made a mound of it, maybe, in honor of Duty. I am as ignorant of him as if he no longer existed; so this image must be torn away. I will not burn the lamp of life before it, but will build up the niche where it stands into a solid wall."

The ideal happiness of love is so sweet and powerful, that, for a while, adverse influences only exalt the imagination. When Laura told me of Redmond's engagement, it did but change my dream of what might be into what might have been. It was a mirage which continued while he was present and faded with his departure. Then my heart was locked in the depths of will, till circumstance brought it a power of revenge. I think now, if we had spoken freely and truly to each other, I should have suffered less when I saw his friend. We feel better when the funeral of our dearest friend is over and we have returned to the house. There is to be no more preparation, no waiting; the windows may be opened, and the doors set wide; the very dreariness and desolation force our attention towards the living.

"Something will come," I thought; and I determined not to have any more reveries. "Mr. Harry Lothrop is a pleasant riddle; I shall see him soon, or he will write."

It occurred to me then that I had some letters of his already in my possession,—those he had written to Laura. I found the ebony box, and, taking from it the sealed package, unfolded the letters one by one, reading them according to their dates. There was a note among them for me, from Laura.

"When you read these letters, Margaret," it said, "you will see that I must have studied the writer of them in vain. You know now that he made me unhappy; not that I was in love with him much, but he stirred depths of feeling which I had no knowledge of, and which between Frank, my

betrothed husband, and myself had no existence. But '*le roi s'amuse.*' Perhaps a strong passion will master this man; but I shall never know. Will you?"

I laid the letters back in their place, and felt no very strong desire to learn anything more of the writer. I did not know then how little trouble it would be,—my share of making the acquaintance.

It was not many weeks before Mr. Lothrop came again, and rather ostentatiously, so that everybody knew of his visit to me. But he saw none of the friends he had made during his stay the year before. I happened to see him coming, and went to the door to meet him. Almost his first words were,—

"Maurice is dead. He went to Florida,—took the fever,—which killed him, of course. He died only a week after—after Laura. Poor fellow! did he interest you much? I believe he was in love with you, too; but musical people are never desperate, except when they play a false note."

"Yes," I answered; "I was fond of him. His conceit did not trouble me, and he never fatigued me; he had nothing to conceal. He was a commonplace man; one liked him, when with him,—and when away, one had no thought about him."

"I alone am left you," said my visitor, putting his hat on a chair, and slowly pulling off his gloves, finger by finger.

He had slender, white hands, like a woman's, and they were always in motion. After he had thrown his gloves into his hat, he put his finger against his cheek, leaned his elbow on the arm of his chair, crossed his legs, and looked at me with a cunning self-possession. I glanced at his feet; they were small and well-booted. I looked into his face; it was not a handsome one; but he had magnetic eyes, of a lightish blue, and a clever, loose mouth. It is impossible to describe him,—just as impossible as it is for a man who was born a boor to attain the bearing of a gentleman; any attempt at it would prove a bungling matter, when compared with the original. He felt my scrutiny, and knew, too, that I had never looked at him till then.

"Do you sing nowadays?" he asked, tapping with his fingers the keys of the piano behind him.

"Psalms."

"They suit you admirably; but I perceive you attend to your dress still. How effective those velvet bands are! You look older than you did two years ago."

"Two years are enough to age a woman."

"Yes, if she is miserable. Can you be unhappy?" he asked, rising, and taking a seat beside me.

There was a tone of sympathy in his voice which made me shudder, I knew not why. It was neither aversion nor liking; but I dreaded to be thrown into any tumult of feeling. I realized afterward more fully that it is next to impossible for a passionate woman to receive the sincere addresses of a manly man without feeling some fluctuation of soul. Ignorant spectators call her a coquette for this. Happily, there are teachers among our own sex, women of cold temperaments, able to vindicate themselves from the imputation. They spare themselves great waste of heart and some generous emotion,—also remorse and self-accusations regarding the want of propriety, and the other ingredients which go to make up a white-muslin heroine.

Harry Lothrop saw that my cheek was burning, and made a movement toward me. I tossed my head back, and moved down the sofa; he did not follow me, but smiled and mused in his old way.

And so it went on,—not once, but many times. He wrote me quiet, persuasive, eloquent letters. By degrees I learned his own history and that of his family, his prospects and his intentions. He was rich. I knew well what position I should have, if I were his wife. My beauty would be splendidly set. I was well enough off, but not rich enough to harmonize all things according to my taste. I was proud, and he was refined; if we were married, what better promise of delicacy could be given than that of pride in a woman, refinement in a man? He brought me flowers or books, when he came. The flowers were not delicate and inodorous, but magnificent and deep-scented; and the material of the books was stalwart and vigorous. I read his favorite authors with him. He was the first person who ever made any appeal to my intellect. In short, he was educating me for a purpose.

Once he offered me a diamond cross. I refused it, and he never asked me to accept any gift again. His visits were not frequent, and they were short. However great the distance he accomplished to reach me, he staid only an evening, and then returned. He came and went at night. In time I grew to look upon our connection as an established thing. He made me understand that he loved me, and that he only waited for me to return it; but he did not say so.

I lived an idle life, inhaling the perfume of the flowers he gave me, devouring old literature, the taste for which he had created, and reading and answering his letters. To be sure, other duties were fulfilled, I was an affectionate child to my parents, and a proper acquaintance for my friends. I never lost any sleep now, nor was I troubled with dreams. I lived in the outward; all my restless activity, that constant questioning of the heavens and the earth, had ceased entirely. Five years had passed since I first saw Redmond. I was now twenty-four. The Fates grew tired of the monotony of my life, I suppose, for about this time it changed.

My oldest brother, a bachelor, lived in New York. He asked me to spend the winter with him; he lived in a quiet hotel, had a suite of rooms, and could make me comfortable, he said. He had just asked somebody to marry him, and that somebody wished to make my acquaintance. I was glad to go. My heart gave a bound at the prospect of change; I was still young enough to dream of the impossible, when any chance offered itself to my imagination; so I accepted my brother's invitation with some elation.

I had been in New York a month. One day I was out with my future sister, on a shopping raid; with our hands full of little paper parcels, we stopped to look into Goupil's window. There was always a rim of crowd there, so I paid no attention to the jostles we received. We were looking at an engraving of Ary Scheffer's Françoise de Rimini. "Not the worst hell," muttered a voice behind me, which I knew. I started, and pulled Leonora's arm; she turned round, and the fringe of her cloak-sleeve caught a button on the overcoat of one of the gentlemen standing together. It was Redmond; the other was his "ancient," Harry Lothrop. Leonora was arrested; I stood still, of course. Redmond had not seen my face, for I turned it from him; and his head was bent down to the task of disengaging his button.

"'Each only as God wills
Can work; God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first,'"

I thought, and turned my head. He instinctively took off his hat, and then planted it back on his head firmly, and looked over to Harry Lothrop, to whom I gave my hand. He knew me before I saw him, I am convinced; but his dramatic sense kept him silent,—perhaps a deeper feeling. There was an expression of pain in his face, which impelled me to take his arm.

"Let us move on, Leonora," I said; "these are some summer friends of mine," and I introduced them to her.

My chief feeling was embarrassment, which was shared by all the party; for Leonora felt that there was something unusual in the meeting. The door of the hotel seemed to come round at last, and as we were going in, Harry Lothrop asked me if he might see me the next morning.

"Do come," I answered aloud.

We all bowed, and they disappeared.

"What an elegant Indian your tall friend is!" said Leonora.

"Yes,—of the Camanche tribe."

"But he would look better hanging from his horse's mane than he does in a long coat."

"He is spoiled by civilization and white parents. But, Leonora, stay and dine with me, in my own room. John will not come home till it is time for the opera. You know we are going. You must make me splendid; you can torture me into style, I know."

She consented, provided I would send a note to her mother, explaining that it was my invitation, and not her old John's, as she irreverently called him. I did so, and she was delighted to stay.

"This is fast," she said; "can't we have Champagne and black coffee?"

She fell to rummaging John's closets, and brought out a dusty, Chinese-looking affair, which she put on for a dressing-gown. She found some Chinese straw shoes, and tucked her little feet into them, and then braided her hair in a long tail, and declared she was ready for dinner. Her gayety was refreshing, and I did not wonder at John's admiration. My spirits rose, too, and I astonished Leonora at the table with my chat; she had never seen me except when quiet. I fell into one of those unselfish, unasking moods which are the glory of youth: I felt that the pure heaven of love was in the depths of my being; my soul shone like a star in its atmosphere; my heart throbbed, and I cried softly to it, —"Live! live! he is here!" I still chatted with Leonora and made her laugh, and the child for the first time thoroughly liked me. We were finishing our dessert, when we heard John's knock. We allowed him to come in for a moment, and gave him some almonds, which, he leisurely cracked and ate.

"Somehow, Margaret," he said, "you remind me of those women who enjoy the Indian festival of the funeral pile. I have seen the thing done; you have something of the sort in your mind; be sure to immolate yourself handsomely. Women are the deuse."

"Finish your almonds, John," I said, "and go away; we must dress."

He put his hand on my arm, and whispered,—

"Smother that light in your eyes, my girl; it is dangerous. And you have lived under your mother's eye all your life! You see what I have done,"—indicating Leonora with his eyebrows, —"taken a baby on my hands."

"John, John!" I inwardly ejaculated, "you are an idiot."

"She shall never suffer what you suffer; she shall have the benefit of the experience which other women have given me."

"Very likely," I answered; "I know we often serve you as pioneers merely."

He gave a sad nod, and I closed the door upon him.

"Put these pins into my hair, Leonora, and tell me, how do you like my new dress?"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.