PROSE POEMS.

THE ISLAND OF THE FAY.

"Nullus enim locus sine genio est."

Servius.

"La musique," says Marmontel, in those "Contes Moraux"[1] which in all our translations we have insisted upon calling "Moral Tales," as if in mockery of their spirit--"la musique est le seul des talens qui jouisse de lui-meme: tous les autres veulent des temoins." He here confounds the pleasure derivable from sweet sounds with the capacity for creating them. No more than any other talent, is that for music susceptible of complete enjoyment where there is no second party to appreciate its exercise; and it is only in common with other talents that it produces effects which may be fully enjoyed in solitude. The idea which the raconteur has either failed to entertain clearly, or has sacrificed in its expression to his national love of point, is doubtless the very tenable one that the higher order of music is the most thoroughly estimated when we are exclusively alone. The proposition in this form will be admitted at once by those who love the lyre for its own sake and

for its spiritual uses. But there is one pleasure still within the reach of fallen mortality, and perhaps only one, which owes even more than does music to the accessory sentiment of seclusion. I mean the happiness experienced in the contemplation of natural scenery. In truth, the man who would behold aright the glory of God upon earth must in solitude behold that glory. To me at least the presence, not of human life only, but of life, in any other form than that of the green things which grow upon the soil and are voiceless, is a stain upon the landscape, is at war with the genius of the scene. I love, indeed, to regard the dark valleys, and the gray rocks, and the waters that silently smile, and the forests that sigh in uneasy slumbers, and the proud watchful mountains that look down upon all,--I love to regard these as themselves but the colossal members of one vast animate and sentient whole--a whole whose form (that of the sphere) is the most perfect and most inclusive of all; whose path is among associate planets; whose meek handmaiden is the moon; whose mediate sovereign is the sun; whose life is eternity; whose thought is that of a god; whose enjoyment is knowledge; whose destinies are lost in immensity; whose cognizance of ourselves is akin with our own cognizance of the animalculæ which infest the brain, a being which we in consequence regard as purely inanimate and material, much in the same manner as these animalculæ must thus regard us.

Our telescopes and our mathematical investigations assure us on every hand, notwithstanding the cant of the more ignorant of the priesthood, that space, and therefore that bulk, is an important consideration in the eyes of the Almighty. The cycles in which the stars move are those

best adapted for the evolution, without collision, of the greatest possible number of bodies. The forms of those bodies are accurately such as within a given surface to include the greatest possible amount of matter; while the surfaces themselves are so disposed as to accommodate a denser population than could be accommodated on the same surfaces otherwise arranged. Nor is it any argument against bulk being an object with God that space itself is infinite; for there may be an infinity of matter to fill it; and since we see clearly that the endowment of matter with vitality is a principle--indeed, as far as our judgments extend, the leading principle in the operations of Deity, it is scarcely logical to imagine it confined to the regions of the minute, where we daily trace it, and not extending to those of the august. As we find cycle within cycle without end, yet all revolving around one far-distant centre which is the Godhead, may we not analogically suppose, in the same manner, life within life, the less within the greater, and all within the Spirit Divine? In short, we are madly erring through self-esteem in believing man, in either his temporal or future destinies, to be of more moment in the universe than that vast "clod of the valley" which he tills and contemns, and to which he denies a soul, for no more profound reason than that he does not behold it in operation [2].

These fancies, and such as these, have always given to my meditations among the mountains and the forests, by the rivers and the ocean, a tinge of what the every-day world would not fail to term the fantastic. My wanderings amid such scenes have been many and far-searching, and

often solitary; and the interest with which I have strayed through many a dim deep valley, or gazed into the reflected heaven of many a bright lake, has been an interest greatly deepened by the thought that I have strayed and gazed alone. What flippant Frenchman [3] was it who said, in allusion to the well known work of Zimmermann, that "la solitude est une belle chose; mais il faut quelqu'un pour vous dire que la solitude est une belle chose"? The epigram cannot be gainsaid; but the necessity is a thing that does not exist.

It was during one of my lonely journeyings, amid a far distant region of mountain locked within mountain, and sad rivers and melancholy tarns writhing or sleeping within all, that I chanced upon a certain rivulet and island. I came upon them suddenly in the leafy June, and threw myself upon the turf beneath the branches of an unknown odorous shrub, that I might doze as I contemplated the scene. I felt that thus only should I look upon it, such was the character of phantasm which it wore.

On all sides, save to the west where the sun was about sinking, arose the verdant walls of the forest. The little river which turned sharply in its course, and was thus immediately lost to sight, seemed to have no exit from its prison, but to be absorbed by the deep green foliage of the trees to the east; while in the opposite quarter (so it appeared to me as I lay at length and glanced upward) there poured down noiselessly and continuously into the valley a rich golden and crimson waterfall from the sunset fountains of the sky.

About midway in the short vista which my dreamy vision took in, one small circular island, profusely verdured, reposed upon the bosom of the stream.

So blended bank and shadow there,
That each seemed pendulous in air--

so mirror-like was the glassy water, that it was scarcely possible to say at what point upon the slope of the emerald turf its crystal dominion began. My position enabled me to include in a single view both the eastern and western extremities of the islet, and I observed a singularly-marked difference in their aspects. The latter was all one radiant harem of garden beauties. It glowed and blushed beneath the eye of the slant sunlight, and fairly laughed with flowers. The grass was short, springy, sweet-scented, and Asphodel-interspersed. The trees were lithe, mirthful, erect, bright, slender, and graceful, of eastern figure and foliage, with bark smooth, glossy, and parti-colored. There seemed a deep sense of life and joy about all, and although no airs blew from out the heavens, yet everything had motion through the gentle sweepings to and fro of innumerable butterflies, that might have been mistaken for tulips with wings [4].

The other or eastern end of the isle was whelmed in the blackest shade. A sombre, yet beautiful and peaceful gloom, here pervaded all things. The trees were dark in color and mournful in form and attitude--wreathing themselves into sad, solemn, and spectral shapes, that

conveyed ideas of mortal sorrow and untimely death. The grass wore the deep tint of the cypress, and the heads of its blades hung droopingly, and hither and thither among it were many small unsightly hillocks, low and narrow, and not very long, that had the aspect of graves, but were not, although over and all about them the rue and the rosemary clambered. The shades of the trees fell heavily upon the water, and seemed to bury itself therein, impregnating the depths of the element with darkness. I fancied that each shadow, as the sun descended lower and lower, separated itself sullenly from the trunk that gave it birth, and thus became absorbed by the stream, while other shadows issued momently from the trees, taking the place of their predecessors thus entombed.

This idea having once seized upon my fancy greatly excited it, and I lost myself forthwith in reverie. "If ever island were enchanted," said I to myself, "this is it. This is the haunt of the few gentle Fays who remain from the wreck of the race. Are these green tombs theirs?--or do they yield up their sweet lives as mankind yield up their own? In dying, do they not rather waste away mournfully, rendering unto God little by little their existence, as these trees render up shadow after shadow, exhausting their substance unto dissolution? What the wasting tree is to the water that imbibes its shade, growing thus blacker by what it preys upon, may not the life of the Fay be to the death which engulfs it?"

As I thus mused, with half-shut eyes, while the sun sank rapidly to rest, and eddying currents careered round and round the island, bearing

upon their bosom large dazzling white flakes of the bark of the sycamore, flakes which, in their multiform positions upon the water, a quick imagination might have converted into anything it pleased; while I thus mused, it appeared to me that the form of one of those very Fays about whom I had been pondering, made its way slowly into the darkness from out the light at the western end of the island. She stood erect in a singularly fragile canoe, and urged it with the mere phantom of an oar. While within the influence of the lingering sunbeams, her attitude seemed indicative of joy, but sorrow deformed it as she passed within the shade. Slowly she glided along, and at length rounded the islet and re-entered the region of light. "The revolution which has just been made by the Fay," continued I musingly, "is the cycle of the brief year of her life. She has floated through her winter and through her summer. She is a year nearer unto death: for I did not fail to see that as she came into the shade, her shadow fell from her, and was swallowed up in the dark water, making its blackness more black."

And again the boat appeared and the Fay, but about the attitude of the latter there was more of care and uncertainty and less of elastic joy. She floated again from out the light and into the gloom (which deepened momently), and again her shadow fell from her into the ebony water, and became absorbed into its blackness. And again and again she made the circuit of the island (while the sun rushed down to his slumbers), and at each issuing into the light there was more sorrow about her person, while it grew feebler and far fainter and more indistinct, and at each passage into the gloom there fell from her a darker shade, which became

whelmed in a shadow more black. But at length, when the sun had utterly departed, the Fay, now the mere ghost of her former self, went disconsolately with her boat into the region of the ebony flood, and that she issued thence at all I cannot say, for darkness fell over all things, and I beheld her magical figure no more.

[Footnote 1: Moraux is here derived from moeurs, and its meaning is "fashionable," or, more strictly, "of manners."]

[Footnote 2: Speaking of the tides, Pomponius Mela, in his treatise, 'De Sitû Orbis', says,

"Either the world is a great animal, or," etc.]

[Footnote 3: Balzac, in substance; I do not remember the words.]

[Footnote 4:

"Florem putares nare per liquidum æthera."

'P. Commire'.]

'Oinos.'

Pardon, Agathos, the weakness of a spirit new-fledged with immortality!

'Agathos.'

You have spoken nothing, my Oinos, for which pardon is to be demanded. Not even here is knowledge a thing of intuition. For wisdom, ask of the angels freely, that it may be given!

'Oinos.'

But in this existence I dreamed that I should be at once cognizant of all things, and thus at once happy in being cognizant of all.

'Agathos.'

Ah, not in knowledge is happiness, but in the acquisition of

knowledge! In forever knowing, we are forever blessed; but to know all, were the curse of a fiend.

'Oinos.'

But does not The Most High know all?

'Agathos'.

That (since he is The Most Happy) must be still the one thing unknown even to HIM.

'Oinos.'

But, since we grow hourly in knowledge, must not at last all things be known?

'Agathos.'

Look down into the abysmal distances!--attempt to force the gaze down the multitudinous vistas of the stars, as we sweep slowly through them thus--and thus--and thus! Even the spiritual vision, is it not at all

points arrested by the continuous golden walls of the universe?--the walls of the myriads of the shining bodies that mere number has appeared to blend into unity?

'Oinos'.

I clearly perceive that the infinity of matter is no dream.

'Agathos'.

There are no dreams in Aidenn--but it is here whispered that, of this infinity of matter, the sole purpose is to afford infinite springs at which the soul may allay the thirst to know which is forever unquenchable within it--since to quench it would be to extinguish the soul's self. Question me then, my Oinos, freely and without fear. Come! we will leave to the left the loud harmony of the Pleiades, and swoop outward from the throne into the starry meadows beyond Orion, where, for pansies and violets, and heart's-ease, are the beds of the triplicate and triple-tinted suns.

'Oinos'.

And now, Agathos, as we proceed, instruct me!--speak to me in the

earth's familiar tones! I understand not what you hinted to me just now of the modes or of the methods of what during mortality, we were accustomed to call Creation. Do you mean to say that the Creator is not God?

'Agathos'.

I mean to say that the Deity does not create.

'Oinos'.

Explain!

'Agathos'.

In the beginning only, he created. The seeming creatures which are now throughout the universe so perpetually springing into being can only be considered as the mediate or indirect, not as the direct or immediate results of the Divine creative power.

'Oinos.'

Among men, my Agathos, this idea would be considered heretical in the extreme.

'Agathos.'

Among the angels, my Oinos, it is seen to be simply true.

'Oinos.'

I can comprehend you thus far--that certain operations of what we term Nature, or the natural laws, will, under certain conditions, give rise to that which has all the appearance of creation. Shortly before the final overthrow of the earth, there were, I well remember, many very successful experiments in what some philosophers were weak enough to denominate the creation of animalculæ.

'Agathos.'

The cases of which you speak were, in fact, instances of the secondary creation, and of the only species of creation which has ever been since the first word spoke into existence the first law.

'Oinos.'

Are not the starry worlds that, from the abyss of nonentity, burst hourly forth into the heavens--are not these stars, Agathos, the immediate handiwork of the King?

'Agathos.'

Let me endeavor, my Oinos, to lead you, step by step, to the conception I intend. You are well aware that, as no thought can perish, so no act is without infinite result. We moved our hands, for example, when we were dwellers on the earth, and in so doing we gave vibration to the atmosphere which engirdled it. This vibration was indefinitely extended till it gave impulse to every particle of the earth's air, which thenceforward, and forever, was actuated by the one movement of the hand. This fact the mathematicians of our globe well knew. They made the special effects, indeed, wrought in the fluid by special impulses, the subject of exact calculation--so that it became easy to determine in what precise period an impulse of given extent would engirdle the orb, and impress (forever) every atom of the atmosphere circumambient. Retrograding, they found no difficulty; from a given effect, under given conditions, in determining the value of the original impulse. Now the mathematicians who saw that the results of any given impulse were absolutely endless--and who saw that a portion of these results were accurately traceable through the agency

of algebraic analysis--who saw, too, the facility of the retrogradation--these men saw, at the same time, that this species of analysis itself had within itself a capacity for indefinite progress--that there were no bounds conceivable to its advancement and applicability, except within the intellect of him who advanced or applied it. But at this point our mathematicians paused.

'Oinos.'

And why, Agathos, should they have proceeded?

'Agathos.'

Because there were some considerations of deep interest beyond. It was deducible from what they knew, that to a being of infinite understanding--one to whom the perfection of the algebraic analysis lay unfolded--there could be no difficulty in tracing every impulse given the air--and the ether through the air--to the remotest consequences at any even infinitely remote epoch of time. It is indeed demonstrable that every such impulse given the air, must in the end impress every individual thing that exists within the universe;--and the being of infinite understanding--the being whom we have imagined--might trace the remote undulations of the impulse--trace them upward and onward in their influences upon all

particles of all matter--upward and onward forever in their modifications of old forms--or, in other words, in their creation of new--until he found them reflected--unimpressive at last--back from the throne of the Godhead. And not only could such a being do this, but at any epoch, should a given result be afforded him--should one of these numberless comets, for example, be presented to his inspection--he could have no difficulty in determining, by the analytic retrogradation, to what original impulse it was due. This power of retrogradation in its absolute fulness and perfection--this faculty of referring at all epochs, all effects to all causes--is of course the prerogative of the Deity alone--but in every variety of degree, short of the absolute perfection, is the power itself exercised by the whole host of the Angelic Intelligences.

'Oinos'.

But you speak merely of impulses upon the air.

'Agathos'.

In speaking of the air, I referred only to the earth: but the general proposition has reference to impulses upon the ether--which, since it pervades, and alone pervades all space, is thus the great medium of creation.

'Oinos'.

Then all motion, of whatever nature, creates?

'Agathos'.

It must: but a true philosophy has long taught that the source of all motion is thought--and the source of all thought is--

'Oinos'.

God.

'Agathos'.

I have spoken to you, Oinos, as to a child, of the fair Earth which lately perished--of impulses upon the atmosphere of the earth.

'Oinos'.

You did.

'Agathos'.

And while I thus spoke, did there not cross your mind some thought of the physical power of words? Is not every word an impulse on the air?

'Oinos'.

But why, Agathos, do you weep--and why, oh, why do your wings droop as we hover above this fair star--which is the greenest and yet most terrible of all we have encountered in our flight? Its brilliant flowers look like a fairy dream--but its fierce volcanoes like the passions of a turbulent heart.

'Agathos'.

They are!--they are!--This wild star--it is now three centuries since, with clasped hands, and with streaming eyes, at the feet of my beloved--I spoke it--with a few passionate sentences--into birth. Its brilliant flowers are the dearest of all unfulfilled dreams, and its raging volcanoes are the passions of the most turbulent and

unhallowed of hearts!

THE COLLOQUY OF MONOS AND UNA.

[Greek: Mellonta sauta']

These things are in the future.

Sophocles--'Antig.'

'Una.'

"Born again?"

'Monos.'

Yes, fairest and best beloved Una, "born again." These were the words upon whose mystical meaning I had so long pondered, rejecting the explanations of the priesthood, until Death itself resolved for me the secret.

'Una.'

Death!

'Monos.'

How strangely, sweet Una, you echo my words! I observe, too, a vacillation in your step, a joyous inquietude in your eyes. You are confused and oppressed by the majestic novelty of the Life Eternal. Yes, it was of Death I spoke. And here how singularly sounds that word which of old was wont to bring terror to all hearts, throwing a mildew upon all pleasures!

'Una.'

Ah, Death, the spectre which sate at all feasts! How often, Monos, did we lose ourselves in speculations upon its nature! How mysteriously did it act as a check to human bliss, saying unto it, "thus far, and no farther!" That earnest mutual love, my own Monos, which burned within our bosoms, how vainly did we flatter ourselves, feeling happy in its first upspringing that our happiness would strengthen with its strength! Alas, as it grew, so grew in our hearts the dread of that evil hour which was hurrying to separate us forever! Thus in time it became painful to love. Hate would have been mercy then.

'Monos'.

Speak not here of these griefs, dear Una--mine, mine forever now!

'Una'.

But the memory of past sorrow, is it not present joy? I have much to say yet of the things which have been. Above all, I burn to know the incidents of your own passage through the dark Valley and Shadow.

'Monos'.

And when did the radiant Una ask anything of her Monos in vain? I will be minute in relating all, but at what point shall the weird narrative begin?

'Una'.

At what point?

'Monos'.

You have said.

'Una'.

Monos, I comprehend you. In Death we have both learned the propensity of man to define the indefinable. I will not say, then, commence with the moment of life's cessation--but commence with that sad, sad instant when, the fever having abandoned you, you sank into a breathless and motionless torpor, and I pressed down your pallid eyelids with the passionate fingers of love.

'Monos'.

One word first, my Una, in regard to man's general condition at this epoch. You will remember that one or two of the wise among our forefathers--wise in fact, although not in the world's esteem--had ventured to doubt the propriety of the term "improvement," as applied to the progress of our civilization. There were periods in each of the five or six centuries immediately preceding our dissolution when arose some vigorous intellect, boldly contending for those principles whose truth appears now, to our disenfranchised reason, so utterly obvious --principles which should have taught our race to submit to the guidance of the natural laws rather than attempt their control. At long intervals some master-minds appeared, looking upon each advance

in practical science as a retrogradation in the true utility. Occasionally the poetic intellect--that intellect which we now feel to have been the most exalted of all--since those truths which to us were of the most enduring importance could only be reached by that analogy which speaks in proof-tones to the imagination alone, and to the unaided reason bears no weight--occasionally did this poetic intellect proceed a step farther in the evolving of the vague idea of the philosophic, and find in the mystic parable that tells of the tree of knowledge, and of its forbidden fruit, death-producing, a distinct intimation that knowledge was not meet for man in the infant condition of his soul. And these men--the poets--living and perishing amid the scorn of the "utilitarians"--of rough pedants, who arrogated to themselves a title which could have been properly applied only to the scorned--these men, the poets, pondered piningly, yet not unwisely, upon the ancient days when our wants were not more simple than our enjoyments were keen--days when mirth was a word unknown, so solemnly deep-toned was happiness--holy, august, and blissful days, blue rivers ran undammed, between hills unhewn, into far forest solitudes, primeval, odorous, and unexplored. Yet these noble exceptions from the general misrule served but to strengthen it by opposition. Alas! we had fallen upon the most evil of all our evil days. The great "movement"--that was the cant term--went on: a diseased commotion, moral and physical. Art--the Arts--arose supreme, and once enthroned, cast chains upon the intellect which had elevated them to power. Man, because he could not but acknowledge the majesty of Nature, fell into childish exultation at his acquired and

still-increasing dominion over her elements. Even while he stalked a God in his own fancy, an infantine imbecility came over him. As might be supposed from the origin of his disorder, he grew infected with system, and with abstraction. He enwrapped himself in generalities. Among other odd ideas, that of universal equality gained ground; and in the face of analogy and of God--in despite of the loud warning voice of the laws of gradation so visibly pervading all things in Earth and Heaven--wild attempts at an omniprevalent Democracy were made. Yet this evil sprang necessarily from the leading evil, Knowledge. Man could not both know and succumb. Meantime huge smoking cities arose, innumerable. Green leaves shrank before the hot breath of furnaces. The fair face of Nature was deformed as with the ravages of some loathsome disease. And methinks, sweet Una, even our slumbering sense of the forced and of the far-fetched might have arrested us here. But now it appears that we had worked out our own destruction in the perversion of our taste, or rather in the blind neglect of its culture in the schools. For, in truth, it was at this crisis that taste alone--that faculty which, holding a middle position between the pure intellect and the moral sense, could never safely have been disregarded--it was now that taste alone could have led us gently back to Beauty, to Nature, and to Life. But alas for the pure contemplative spirit and majestic intuition of Plato! Alas for the [Greek: mousichae] which he justly regarded as an all-sufficient education for the soul! Alas for him and for it!--since both were most desperately needed, when both were most entirely forgotten or despised [1]. Pascal, a philosopher whom we both love, has said, how

truly!--"Que tout notre raisonnement se réduit à céder au sentiment;" and it is not impossible that the sentiment of the natural, had time permitted it, would have regained its old ascendency over the harsh mathematical reason of the schools. But this thing was not to be. Prematurely induced by intemperance of knowledge, the old age of the world drew near. This the mass of mankind saw not, or, living lustily although unhappily, affected not to see. But, for myself, the Earth's records had taught me to look for widest ruin as the price of highest civilization. I had imbibed a prescience of our Fate from comparison of China the simple and enduring, with Assyria the architect, with Egypt the astrologer, with Nubia, more crafty than either, the turbulent mother of all Arts. In the history of these regions I met with a ray from the Future. The individual artificialities of the three latter were local diseases of the Earth, and in their individual overthrows we had seen local remedies applied; but for the infected world at large I could anticipate no regeneration save in death. That man, as a race, should not become extinct, I saw that he must be "born again."

And now it was, fairest and dearest, that we wrapped our spirits, daily, in dreams. Now it was that, in twilight, we discoursed of the days to come, when the Art-scarred surface of the Earth, having undergone that purification which alone could efface its rectangular obscenities, should clothe itself anew in the verdure and the mountain-slopes and the smiling waters of Paradise, and be rendered at length a fit dwelling-place for man:--for man the Death-purged--for

man to whose now exalted intellect there should be poison in knowledge no more--for the redeemed, regenerated, blissful, and now immortal, but still for the material, man.

'Una'.

Well do I remember these conversations, dear Monos; but the epoch of the fiery overthrow was not so near at hand as we believed, and as the corruption you indicate did surely warrant us in believing. Men lived; and died individually. You yourself sickened, and passed into the grave; and thither your constant Una speedily followed you. And though the century which has since elapsed, and whose conclusion brings up together once more, tortured our slumbering senses with no impatience of duration, yet my Monos, it was a century still.

'Monos'.

Say, rather, a point in the vague infinity. Unquestionably, it was in the Earth's dotage that I died. Wearied at heart with anxieties which had their origin in the general turmoil and decay, I succumbed to the fierce fever. After some few days of pain, and many of dreamy delirium replete with ecstasy, the manifestations of which you mistook for pain, while I longed but was impotent to undeceive you--after some days there came upon me, as you have said, a breathless and motionless

torpor; and this was termed Death by those who stood around me.

Words are vague things. My condition did not deprive me of sentience. It appeared to me not greatly dissimilar to the extreme quiescence of him, who, having slumbered long and profoundly, lying motionless and fully prostrate in a mid-summer noon, begins to steal slowly back into consciousness, through the mere sufficiency of his sleep, and without being awakened by external disturbances.

I breathed no longer. The pulses were still. The heart had ceased to beat. Volition had not departed, but was powerless. The senses were unusually active, although eccentrically so--assuming often each other's functions at random. The taste and the smell were inextricably confounded, and became one sentiment, abnormal and intense. The rose-water with which your tenderness had moistened my lips to the last, affected me with sweet fancies of flowers--fantastic flowers, far more lovely than any of the old Earth, but whose prototypes we have here blooming around us. The eye-lids, transparent and bloodless, offered no complete impediment to vision. As volition was in abeyance, the balls could not roll in their sockets--but all objects within the range of the visual hemisphere were seen with more or less distinctness; the rays which fell upon the external retina, or into the corner of the eye, producing a more vivid effect than those which struck the front or interior surface. Yet, in the former instance, this effect was so far anomalous that I appreciated it only as sound--sound sweet or discordant as the matters presenting

themselves at my side were light or dark in shade--curved or angular in outline. The hearing, at the same time, although excited in degree, was not irregular in action--estimating real sounds with an extravagance of precision, not less than of sensibility. Touch had undergone a modification more peculiar. Its impressions were tardily received, but pertinaciously retained, and resulted always in the highest physical pleasure. Thus the pressure of your sweet fingers upon my eyelids, at first only recognized through vision, at length, long after their removal, filled my whole being with a sensual delight immeasurable. I say with a sensual delight. All my perceptions were purely sensual. The materials furnished the passive brain by the senses were not in the least degree wrought into shape by the deceased understanding. Of pain there was some little; of pleasure there was much; but of moral pain or pleasure none at all. Thus your wild sobs floated into my ear with all their mournful cadences, and were appreciated in their every variation of sad tone; but they were soft musical sounds and no more; they conveyed to the extinct reason no intimation of the sorrows which gave them birth; while large and constant tears which fell upon my face, telling the bystanders of a heart which broke, thrilled every fibre of my frame with ecstasy alone. And this was in truth the Death of which these bystanders spoke reverently, in low whispers--you, sweet Una, gaspingly, with loud cries.

They attired me for the coffin--three or four dark figures which flitted busily to and fro. As these crossed the direct line of my

vision they affected me as forms; but upon passing to my side their images impressed me with the idea of shrieks, groans, and, other dismal expressions of terror, of horror, or of woe. You alone, habited in a white robe, passed in all directions musically about.

The day waned; and, as its light faded away, I became possessed by a vague uneasiness--an anxiety such as the sleeper feels when sad real sounds fall continuously within his ear--low distant bell-tones, solemn, at long but equal intervals, and commingling with melancholy dreams. Night arrived; and with its shadows a heavy discomfort. It oppressed my limbs with the oppression of some dull weight, and was palpable. There was also a moaning sound, not unlike the distant reverberation of surf, but more continuous, which, beginning with the first twilight, had grown in strength with the darkness. Suddenly lights were brought into the rooms, and this reverberation became forthwith interrupted into frequent unequal bursts of the same sound, but less dreary and less distinct. The ponderous oppression was in a great measure relieved; and, issuing from the flame of each lamp (for there were many), there flowed unbrokenly into my ears a strain of melodious monotone. And when now, dear Una, approaching the bed upon which I lay outstretched, you sat gently by my side, breathing odor from your sweet lips, and pressing them upon my brow, there arose tremulously within my bosom, and mingling with the merely physical sensations which circumstances had called forth, a something akin to sentiment itself--a feeling that, half appreciating, half responded to your earnest love and sorrow; but this feeling took no root in the

pulseless heart, and seemed indeed rather a shadow than a reality, and faded quickly away, first into extreme quiescence, and then into a purely sensual pleasure as before.

And now, from the wreck and the chaos of the usual senses, there appeared to have arisen within me a sixth, all perfect. In its exercise I found a wild delight--yet a delight still physical, inasmuch as the understanding had in it no part. Motion in the animal frame had fully ceased. No muscle quivered; no nerve thrilled; no artery throbbed. But there seemed to have sprung up in the brain that of which no words could convey to the merely human intelligence even an indistinct conception. Let me term it a mental pendulous pulsation. It was the moral embodiment of man's abstract idea of Time. By the absolute equalization of this movement--or of such as this--had the cycles of the firmamental orbs themselves been adjusted. By its aid I measured the irregularities of the clock upon the mantel, and of the watches of the attendants. Their tickings came sonorously to my ears. The slightest deviations from the true proportion--and these deviations were omniprevalent--affected me just as violations of abstract truth were wont on earth to affect the moral sense. Although no two of the timepieces in the chamber struck the individual seconds accurately together, yet I had no difficulty in holding steadily in mind the tones, and the respective momentary errors of each. And this--this keen, perfect self-existing sentiment of duration--this sentiment existing (as man could not possibly have conceived it to exist) independently of any succession of events--this idea--this

sixth sense, upspringing from the ashes of the rest, was the first obvious and certain step of the intemporal soul upon the threshold of the temporal eternity.

It was midnight; and you still sat by my side. All others had departed from the chamber of Death. They had deposited me in the coffin. The lamps burned flickeringly; for this I knew by the tremulousness of the monotonous strains. But suddenly these strains diminished in distinctness and in volume. Finally they ceased. The perfume in my nostrils died away. Forms affected my vision no longer. The oppression of the Darkness uplifted itself from my bosom. A dull shot like that of electricity pervaded my frame, and was followed by total loss of the idea of contact. All of what man has termed sense was merged in the sole consciousness of entity, and in the one abiding sentiment of duration. The mortal body had been at length stricken with the hand of the deadly Decay.

Yet had not all of sentience departed; for the consciousness and the sentiment remaining supplied some of its functions by a lethargic intuition. I appreciated the direful change now in operation upon the flesh, and, as the dreamer is sometimes aware of the bodily presence of one who leans over him, so, sweet Una, I still dully felt that you sat by my side. So, too, when the noon of the second day came, I was not unconscious of those movements which displaced you from my side, which confined me within the coffin, which deposited me within the hearse, which bore me to the grave, which lowered me within it, which

heaped heavily the mould upon me, and which thus left me, in blackness and corruption, to my sad and solemn slumbers with the worm.

And here in the prison-house which has few secrets to disclose, there rolled away days and weeks and months; and the soul watched narrowly each second as it flew, and, without effort, took record of its flight--without effort and without object.

A year passed. The consciousness of being had grown hourly more indistinct, and that of mere locality had in great measure usurped its position. The idea of entity was becoming merged in that of place. The narrow space immediately surrounding what had been the body was now growing to be the body itself. At length, as often happens to the sleeper (by sleep and its world alone is Death imaged)--at length, as sometimes happened on Earth to the deep slumberer, when some flitting light half startled him into awaking, yet left him half enveloped in dreams--so to me, in the strict embrace of the Shadow, came that light which alone might have had power to startle--the light of enduring Love. Men toiled at the grave in which I lay darkling. They upthrew the damp earth. Upon my mouldering bones there descended the coffin of Una. And now again all was void. That nebulous light had been extinguished. That feeble thrill had vibrated itself into quiescence. Many lustra had supervened. Dust had returned to dust. The worm had food no more. The sense of being had at length utterly departed, and there reigned in its stead--instead of all things, dominant and perpetual--the autocrats Place

and Time. For that which was not--for that which had no form--for that which had no thought--for that which had no sentience--for that which was soundless, yet of which matter formed no portion--for all this nothingness, yet for all this immortality, the grave was still a home, and the corrosive hours, co-mates.

[Footnote 1:

"It will be hard to discover a better [method of education] than that which the experience of so many ages has already discovered; and this may be summed up as consisting in gymnastics for the body, and music for the soul."

Repub. lib. 2.

"For this reason is a musical education most essential; since it causes Rhythm and Harmony to penetrate most intimately into the soul, taking the strongest hold upon it, filling it with beauty and making the man beautiful-minded. ... He will praise and admire the beautiful, will receive it with joy into his soul, will feed upon it, and assimilate his own condition with it."

Ibid. lib. 3. Music had, however, among the Athenians, a far more comprehensive signification than with us. It included not only the

harmonies of time and of tune, but the poetic diction, sentiment and creation, each in its widest sense. The study of music was with them, in fact, the general cultivation of the taste--of that which recognizes the beautiful--in contradistinction from reason, which deals only with the true.]

THE CONVERSATION OF EIROS AND CHARMION.

I will bring fire to thee.

Euripides.--'Androm'.

'Eiros'.

Why do you call me Eiros?

'Charmion'.

So henceforward will you always be called. You must forget, too, my earthly name, and speak to me as Charmion.

'Eiros'.

This is indeed no dream!

'Charmion'.

Dreams are with us no more;--but of these mysteries anon. I rejoice to see you looking life-like and rational. The film of the shadow has already passed from off your eyes. Be of heart, and fear nothing. Your allotted days of stupor have expired, and to-morrow I will myself induct you into the full joys and wonders of your novel existence.

'Eiros'.

True--I feel no stupor--none at all. The wild sickness and the terrible darkness have left me, and I hear no longer that mad, rushing, horrible sound, like the "voice of many waters." Yet my senses are bewildered, Charmion, with the keenness of their perception of the new.

'Charmion'.

A few days will remove all this;--but I fully understand you, and feel for you. It is now ten earthly years since I underwent what you undergo--yet the remembrance of it hangs by me still. You have now suffered all of pain, however, which you will suffer in Aidenn.

'Eiros'.

In Aidenn?

'Charmion'.

In Aidenn.

'Eiros'.

O God!--pity me, Charmion!--I am overburthened with the majesty of all things--of the unknown now known--of the speculative Future merged in the august and certain Present.

'Charmion'.

Grapple not now with such thoughts. To-morrow we will speak of this. Your mind wavers, and its agitation will find relief in the exercise of simple memories. Look not around, nor forward--but back. I am burning with anxiety to hear the details of that stupendous event which threw you among us. Tell me of it. Let us converse of familiar things, in the old familiar language of the world which has so fearfully perished.

'Eiros'.

Most fearfully, fearfully!--this is indeed no dream.

'Charmion'.

Dreams are no more. Was I much mourned, my Eiros?

'Eiros'.

Mourned, Charmion?--oh, deeply. To that last hour of all there hung a cloud of intense gloom and devout sorrow over your household.

'Charmion'.

And that last hour--speak of it. Remember that, beyond the naked fact of the catastrophe itself, I know nothing. When, coming out from among mankind, I passed into Night through the Grave--at that period, if I remember aright, the calamity which overwhelmed you was utterly unanticipated. But, indeed, I knew little of the speculative philosophy of the day.

'Eiros'.

The individual calamity was, as you say, entirely unanticipated; but analogous misfortunes had been long a subject of discussion with astronomers. I need scarce tell you, my friend, that, even when you left us, men had agreed to understand those passages in the most holy writings which speak of the final destruction of all things by fire as having reference to the orb of the earth alone, But in regard to the immediate agency of the ruin, speculation had been at fault from that epoch in astronomical knowledge in which the comets were divested of the terrors of flame. The very moderate density of these bodies had been well established. They had been observed to pass among the satellites of Jupiter without bringing about any sensible alteration either in the masses or in the orbits of these secondary planets. We had long regarded the wanderers as vapory creations of inconceivable tenuity, and as altogether incapable of doing injury to our substantial globe, even in the event of contact. But contact was not in any degree dreaded; for the elements of all the comets were accurately known. That among them we should look for the agency of the threatened fiery destruction had been for many years considered an inadmissible idea. But wonders and wild fancies had been of late days strangely rife among mankind; and, although it was only with a few of the ignorant that actual apprehension prevailed, upon the announcement by astronomers of a new comet, yet this announcement was generally received with I know not what of agitation and mistrust.

The elements of the strange orb were immediately calculated, and it was at once conceded by all observers that its path, at perihelion would bring it into very close proximity with the earth. There were two or three astronomers of secondary note who resolutely maintained that a contact was inevitable. I cannot very well express to you the effect of this intelligence upon the people. For a few short days they would not believe an assertion which their intellect, so long employed among worldly considerations, could not in any manner grasp. But the truth of a vitally important fact soon makes its way into the understanding of even the most stolid. Finally, all men saw that astronomical knowledge lies not, and they awaited the comet. Its approach was not at first seemingly rapid, nor was its appearance of very unusual character. It was of a dull red, and had little perceptible train. For seven or eight days we saw no material increase in its apparent diameter, and but a partial alteration in its color. Meantime, the ordinary affairs of men were discarded, and all interest absorbed in a growing discussion instituted by the philosophic in respect to the cometary nature. Even the grossly ignorant aroused their sluggish capacities to such considerations. The learned now gave their intellect--their soul--to no such points as the allaying of fear, or to the sustenance of loved theory. They sought--they panted for right views. They groaned for perfected knowledge. Truth arose in the purity of her strength and exceeding majesty, and the wise bowed down and adored.

That material injury to our globe or to its inhabitants would result

from the apprehended contact was an opinion which hourly lost ground among the wise; and the wise were now freely permitted to rule the reason and the fancy of the crowd. It was demonstrated that the density of the comet's nucleus was far less than that of our rarest gas; and the harmless passage of a similar visitor among the satellites of Jupiter was a point strongly insisted upon, and which served greatly to allay terror. Theologists, with an earnestness fear-enkindled, dwelt upon the biblical prophecies, and expounded them to the people with a directness and simplicity of which no previous instance had been known. That the final destruction of the earth must be brought about by the agency of fire, was urged with a spirit that enforced everywhere conviction; and that the comets were of no fiery nature (as all men now knew) was a truth which relieved all, in a great measure, from the apprehension of the great calamity foretold. It is noticeable that the popular prejudices and vulgar errors in regard to pestilences and wars--errors which were wont to prevail upon every appearance of a comet--were now altogether unknown, as if by some sudden convulsive exertion reason had at once hurled superstition from her throne. The feeblest intellect had derived vigor from excessive interest.

What minor evils might arise from the contact were points of elaborate question. The learned spoke of slight geological disturbances, of probable alterations in climate, and consequently in vegetation; of possible magnetic and electric influences. Many held that no visible or perceptible effect would in any manner be produced. While such

discussions were going on, their subject gradually approached, growing larger in apparent diameter, and of a more brilliant lustre. Mankind grew paler as it came. All human operations were suspended.

There was an epoch in the course of the general sentiment when the comet had attained, at length, a size surpassing that of any previously recorded visitation. The people now, dismissing any lingering hope that the astronomers were wrong, experienced all the certainty of evil. The chimerical aspect of their terror was gone. The hearts of the stoutest of our race beat violently within their bosoms. A very few days suffered, however, to merge even such feelings in sentiments more unendurable. We could no longer apply to the strange orb any accustomed thoughts. Its historical attributes had disappeared. It oppressed us with a hideous novelty of emotion. We saw it not as an astronomical phenomenon in the heavens, but as an incubus upon our hearts and a shadow upon our brains. It had taken, with unconceivable rapidity, the character of a gigantic mantle of rare flame, extending from horizon to horizon.

Yet a day, and men breathed with greater freedom. It was clear that we were already within the influence of the comet; yet we lived. We even felt an unusual elasticity of frame and vivacity of mind. The exceeding tenuity of the object of our dread was apparent; for all heavenly objects were plainly visible through it. Meantime, our vegetation had perceptibly altered; and we gained faith, from this predicted circumstance, in the foresight of the wise. A wild

luxuriance of foliage, utterly unknown before, burst out upon every vegetable thing.

Yet another day--and the evil was not altogether upon us. It was now evident that its nucleus would first reach us. A wild change had come over all men; and the first sense of pain was the wild signal for general lamentation and horror. The first sense of pain lay in a rigorous construction of the breast and lungs, and an insufferable dryness of the skin. It could not be denied that our atmosphere was radically affected; the conformation of this atmosphere and the possible modifications to which it might be subjected, were now the topics of discussion. The result of investigation sent an electric thrill of the intensest terror through the universal heart of man.

It had been long known that the air which encircled us was a compound of oxygen and nitrogen gases, in the proportion of twenty-one measures of oxygen and seventy-nine of nitrogen in every one hundred of the atmosphere. Oxygen, which was the principle of combustion, and the vehicle of heat, was absolutely necessary to the support of animal life, and was the most powerful and energetic agent in nature. Nitrogen, on the contrary, was incapable of supporting either animal life or flame. An unnatural excess of oxygen would result, it had been ascertained, in just such an elevation of the animal spirits as we had latterly experienced. It was the pursuit, the extension of the idea, which had engendered awe. What would be the result of a total extraction of the nitrogen? A combustion irresistible, all-devouring,

omni-prevalent, immediate;--the entire fulfilment, in all their minute and terrible details, of the fiery and horror-inspiring denunciations of the prophecies of the Holy Book.

Why need I paint, Charmion, the now disenchained frenzy of mankind? That tenuity in the comet which had previously inspired us with hope, was now the source of the bitterness of despair. In its impalpable gaseous character we clearly perceived the consummation of Fate. Meantime a day again passed--bearing away with it the last shadow of Hope. We gasped in the rapid modification of the air. The red blood bounded tumultuously through its strict channels. A furious delirium possessed all men; and with arms rigidly outstretched towards the threatening heavens, they trembled and shrieked aloud. But the nucleus of the destroyer was now upon us;--even here in Aidenn I shudder while I speak. Let me be brief--brief as the ruin that overwhelmed. For a moment there was a wild lurid light alone, visiting and penetrating all things. Then--let us bow down, Charmion, before the excessive majesty of the great God!--then, there came a shouting and pervading sound, as if from the mouth itself of HIM; while the whole incumbent mass of ether in which we existed, burst at once into a species of intense flame, for whose surpassing brilliancy and all-fervid heat even the angels in the high Heaven of pure knowledge have no name. Thus ended all.

SHADOW.--A PARABLE.

Yea! though I walk through the valley of the Shadow.

'Psalm of David'.

Ye who read are still among the living; but I who write shall have long since gone my way into the region of shadows. For indeed strange things shall happen, and secret things be known, and many centuries shall pass away, ere these memorials be seen of men. And, when seen, there will be some to disbelieve and some to doubt, and yet a few who will find much to ponder upon in the characters here graven with a stylus of iron.

The year had been a year of terror, and of feeling more intense than terror for which there is no name upon the earth. For many prodigies and signs had taken place, and far and wide, over sea and land, the black wings of the Pestilence were spread abroad. To those, nevertheless, cunning in the stars, it was not unknown that the heavens wore an aspect of ill; and to me, the Greek Oinos, among others, it was evident that now had arrived the alternation of that seven hundred and ninety-fourth year when, at the entrance of Aries, the planet Jupiter is enjoined with the red ring of the terrible Saturnus. The peculiar spirit of the skies, if I mistake not greatly, made itself manifest, not only in the physical orb of the earth, but in the souls, imaginations, and meditations of

mankind.

Over some flasks of the red Chian wine, within the walls of a noble hall, in a dim city called Ptolemais, we sat, at night, a company of seven. And to our chamber there was no entrance save by a lofty door of brass: and the door was fashioned by the artisan Corinnos, and, being of rare workmanship, was fastened from within. Black draperies, likewise in the gloomy room, shut out from our view the moon, the lurid stars, and the peopleless streets--but the boding and the memory of Evil, they would not be so excluded. There were things around us and about of which I can render no distinct account--things material and spiritual--heaviness in the atmosphere--a sense of suffocation--anxiety--and, above all, that terrible state of existence which the nervous experience when the senses are keenly living and awake, and meanwhile the powers of thought lie dormant. A dead weight hung upon us. It hung upon our limbs--upon the household furniture--upon the goblets from which we drank; and all things were depressed, and borne down thereby--all things save only the flames of the seven iron lamps which illumined our revel. Uprearing themselves in tall slender lines of light, they thus remained burning all pallid and motionless; and in the mirror which their lustre formed upon the round table of ebony at which we sat each of us there assembled beheld the pallor of his own countenance, and the unquiet glare in the downcast eyes of his companions. Yet we laughed and were merry in our proper way--which was hysterical; and sang the songs of Anacreon--which are madness; and drank deeply--although the purple wine reminded us of blood. For there was yet another tenant of our chamber in

the person of young Zoilus. Dead and at full length he lay, enshrouded;--the genius and the demon of the scene. Alas! he bore no portion in our mirth, save that his countenance, distorted with the plague, and his eyes in which Death had but half extinguished the fire of the pestilence, seemed to take such an interest in our merriment as the dead may haply take in the merriment of those who are to die. But although I, Oinos, felt that the eyes of the departed were upon me, still I forced myself not to perceive the bitterness of their expression, and gazing down steadily into the depths of the ebony mirror, sang with a loud and sonorous voice the songs of the son of Teos. But gradually my songs they ceased, and their echoes, rolling afar off among the sable draperies of the chamber, became weak, and undistinguishable, and so faded away. And lo! from among those sable draperies, where the sounds of the song departed, there came forth a dark and undefiled shadow--a shadow such as the moon, when low in heaven, might fashion from the figure of a man: but it was the shadow neither of man nor of God, nor of any familiar thing. And quivering awhile among the draperies of the room it at length rested in full view upon the surface of the door of brass. But the shadow was vague, and formless, and indefinite, and was the shadow neither of man nor God--neither God of Greece, nor God of Chaldæa, nor any Egyptian God. And the shadow rested upon the brazen doorway, and under the arch of the entablature of the door and moved not, nor spoke any word, but there became stationary and remained. And the door whereupon the shadow rested was, if I remember aright, over against the feet of the young Zoilus enshrouded. But we, the seven there assembled, having seen the shadow as

it came out from among the draperies, dared not steadily behold it, but cast down our eyes, and gazed continually into the depths of the mirror of ebony. And at length I, Oinos, speaking some low words, demanded of the shadow its dwelling and its appellation. And the shadow answered, "I am SHADOW, and my dwelling is near to the Catacombs of Ptolemais, and hard by those dim plains of Helusion which border upon the foul Charonian canal." And then did we, the seven, start from our seats in horror, and stand trembling, and shuddering, and aghast: for the tones in the voice of the shadow were not the tones of any one being, but of a multitude of beings, and varying in their cadences from syllable to syllable, fell duskily upon our ears in the well remembered and familiar accents of many thousand departed friends.

SILENCE.--A FABLE.

The mountain pinnacles slumber; valleys, crags, and caves are silent.

"LISTEN to me," said the Demon, as he placed his hand upon my head. "The region of which I speak is a dreary region in Libya, by the borders of the river Zäire. And there is no quiet there, nor silence.

"The waters of the river have a saffron and sickly hue; and they flow not onward to the sea, but palpitate forever and forever beneath the red eye of the sun with a tumultuous and convulsive motion. For many miles on either side of the river's oozy bed is a pale desert of gigantic water-lilies. They sigh one unto the other in that solitude, and stretch towards the heaven their long and ghastly necks, and nod to and fro their everlasting heads. And there is an indistinct murmur which cometh out from among them like the rushing of subterrene water. And they sigh one unto the other.

"But there is a boundary to their realm--the boundary of the dark, horrible, lofty forest. There, like the waves about the Hebrides, the low underwood is agitated continually. But there is no wind throughout the heaven. And the tall primeval trees rock eternally hither and thither with a crashing and mighty sound. And from their high summits, one by one, drop everlasting dews. And at the roots, strange poisonous flowers lie writhing in perturbed slumber. And overhead, with a rustling

and loud noise, the gray clouds rush westwardly forever until they roll, a cataract, over the fiery wall of the horizon. But there is no wind throughout the heaven. And by the shores of the river Zäire there is neither quiet nor silence.

"It was night, and the rain fell; and, falling, it was rain, but, having fallen, it was blood. And I stood in the morass among the tall lilies, and the rain fell upon my head--and the lilies sighed one unto the other in the solemnity of their desolation.

"And, all at once, the moon arose through the thin ghastly mist, and was crimson in color. And mine eyes fell upon a huge gray rock which stood by the shore of the river and was lighted by the light of the moon. And the rock was gray and ghastly, and tall,--and the rock was gray. Upon its front were characters engraven in the stones; and I walked through the morass of water-lilies, until I came close unto the shore, that I might read the characters upon the stone. But I could not decipher them. And I was going back into the morass when the moon shone with a fuller red, and I turned and looked again upon the rock and upon the characters;--and the characters were DESOLATION.

"And I looked upwards, and there stood a man upon the summit of the rock; and I hid myself among the water-lilies that I might discover the action of the man. And the man was tall and stately in form, and wrapped up from his shoulders to his feet in the toga of old Rome. And the outlines of his figure were indistinct--but his features were the

features of a deity; for the mantle of the night, and of the mist, and of the moon, and of the dew, had left uncovered the features of his face. And his brow was lofty with thought, and his eye wild with care; and in the few furrows upon his cheek, I read the fables of sorrow, and weariness, and disgust with mankind, and a longing after solitude.

"And the man sat upon the rock, and leaned his head upon his hand, and looked out upon the desolation. He looked down into the low unquiet shrubbery, and up into the tall primeval trees, and up higher at the rustling heaven, and into the crimson moon. And I lay close within shelter of the lilies, and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude;--but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock.

"And the man turned his attention from the heaven, and looked out upon the dreary river Zäire, and upon the yellow ghastly waters, and upon the pale legions of the water-lilies. And the man listened to the sighs of the water-lilies, and to the murmur that came up from among them. And I lay close within my covert and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude;--but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock.

"Then I went down into the recesses of the morass, and waded afar in among the wilderness of the lilies, and called unto the hippopotami which dwelt among the fens in the recesses of the morass. And the hippopotami heard my call, and came, with the behemoth, unto the foot of

the rock, and roared loudly and fearfully beneath the moon. And I lay close within my covert and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude;--but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock.

"Then I cursed the elements with the curse of tumult; and a frightful tempest gathered in the heaven, where before there had been no wind. And the heaven became livid with the violence of the tempest--and the rain beat upon the head of the man--and the floods of the river came down--and the river was tormented into foam--and the water-lilies shrieked within their beds--and the forest crumbled before the wind--and the thunder rolled--and the lightning fell--and the rock rocked to its foundation. And I lay close within my covert and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude;--but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock.

"Then I grew angry and cursed, with the curse of silence, the river, and the lilies, and the wind, and the forest, and the heaven, and the thunder, and the sighs of the water-lilies. And they became accursed, and were still. And the moon ceased to totter up its pathway to heaven--and the thunder died away--and the lightning did not flash--and the clouds hung motionless--and the waters sunk to their level and remained--and the trees ceased to rock--and the water-lilies sighed no more--and the murmur was heard no longer from among them, nor any shadow of sound throughout the vast illimitable desert. And I looked upon the characters of the rock, and they were changed;--and the characters were

SILENCE.

"And mine eyes fell upon the countenance of the man, and his countenance was wan with terror. And, hurriedly, he raised his head from his hand, and stood forth upon the rock and listened. But there was no voice throughout the vast illimitable desert, and the characters upon the rock were SILENCE. And the man shuddered, and turned his face away, and fled afar off, in haste, so that I beheld him no more."

...

Now there are fine tales in the volumes of the Magi--in the iron-bound, melancholy volumes of the Magi. Therein, I say, are glorious histories of the Heaven, and of the Earth, and of the mighty Sea--and of the Genii that overruled the sea, and the earth, and the lofty heaven. There was much lore, too, in the sayings which were said by the sybils; and holy, holy things were heard of old by the dim leaves that trembled around Dodona--but, as Allah liveth, that fable which the demon told me as he sat by my side in the shadow of the tomb, I hold to be the most wonderful of all! And as the Demon made an end of his story, he fell back within the cavity of the tomb and laughed. And I could not laugh with the Demon, and he cursed me because I could not laugh. And the lynx which dwelleth forever in the tomb, came out therefrom, and lay down at the feet of the Demon, and looked at him steadily in the face.