becomes wilder, and curves in such a multitudinous fashion as to make frequent bridging absolutely necessary. One of the chief charms of this route may perhaps be in the fact that, on the right-hand side, there are two ranges—one always like a Titanic wall, the other a broken line of skirmishers. As one advances higher and higher into the mountain-region, the pines begin to show on the sides of the great cones of sandstone like a shaggy fringe, and the masses of rock are larger and more picturesque. At Huntingdon the hills retire, and leave a pleasant level. Here the Juniata forks, the larger but less picturesque fork striking southward toward Hollidaysburg, and the smaller branch, known as the Little Juniata, going west in the direction of Tyrone. The canal and the Pennsylvania Railroad, which hitherto have faithfully run side by side along the Juniata, now separate also, the canal going with the big branch and the railway with the little one. In consequence of this separation there are many bridges at Huntingdon, and the place looks quite picturesque with its background of mountains and its wandering streams. But henceforth the Juniata ceases to be a river, both branches being just trout-streams, and nothing more. And, what is still more cruel, the Little Juniata loses its beautiful blue color, because it flows through a mining-region, and the miners will persist in washing their ore in its clear wave.

After we leave Huntingdon we are in the mountains altogether. Various creeks join the Little Juniata, which winds so that it has to be bridged every three or four miles. At the junction of Spruce Creek, the mountains on the left, which have been shouldering us for some time back, suddenly hurl a huge barrier over our path in the shape of Tussey's Mountain — a great turtle-backed monster, several thousand feet high. The wall on the right hand closes in at the same time, so that there is no resource left but a tunnel, which, however, is not a very long one. We are now seven miles from Tyrone, the centre of the mountains, and the pines are quite thick. The hills that lie at the base of the mountains show pleasant farm-houses and deep-green-leaved corn. The mountains show us now their fronts and now their bases, but are never out of sight, and at intervals come right up to us. At Tyrone they look as if they had been cleft asunder, for there is a great gap cut between two mountains. This in times past was doubtless the work of the Juniata, and was not so difficult as it looks; for the shaly mountains are very different from the firm limestone, through which the Kanata cuts its way at Trenton Falls. On the right hand, however, the hard sandstone shows for a considerable space, and affords all the stone of which the bridges in the neighborhood are built. Tyrone is built in quite a considerable valley. The mountains open out for some distance to the eastward and to the westward. But north and south they hang on with the persistence of bull-dogs. The river in the olden times must have swelled to a lake here, and cut the gap through the line of mountains that stretch north and south, being aided by countless creeks and nameless streams. Bald-Eagle Creek joins the river here, and, in spring-time, the plain in front of the gap is one stretch of water. The town is built away from the Juniata, and rises in terraces along the Bald-Eagle Creek, the foot-hills being highly cultivated. There is quite a wealth of pine on these mountains, though it is all second growth, every hard-wood tree having been cut down to supply charcoal for the Tyrone forges, which originated the city, though now it is a centre for the mountain railroads. The scenery around is decidedly Alpine in character; and some of the roads made for the lumber business traverse regions of savage beauty. Thunder-storms are of daily occurrence up in these heights, and luckless is the stranger wight who trusts to his umbrella; for the winds will turn it inside out, and will propel it forward, dragging its reluctant owner to the brink of precipices, and, after giving him chills of terror, will at length drag it from his grasp, and leave him umbrellaless, exposed to the pelting storm. The curious thing about these storms is, that one does not last five minutes, and the sun is out and drying one's habiliments long before such a thing could be hoped for. But the clouds whirl about the mountains so furiously that one is sure to be caught several times, and the writer was wetted to the skin three distinct times when descending Sinking-Run Hill, a mountain about six miles from Tyrone. An old road, now discontinued for lumber travel, starts from the side of the mountain, about half-way up, and descends circuitously to the base of the opposite mountain. Wild-cherries and whortleberries grow in abundance, and the route is shaded by pines and hickories, while an occasional spruce-tree adds variety to the foliage. The waters of the run are agreeable to drink, though impregnated by sand. In the spring of the year the mountains are one blaze of rhododendron-blossoms. Then is the time to visit them if one is not afraid of wet feet; for the waters are then out in every direction, and tiny runs of water trickle across the road everywhere.

ST. CLAIR FLATS.

IN September, 1855, I first saw the St. Clair Flats. Owing to Raymond's determination, we stopped there.

"Why go on?" he asked. "Why cross another long, rough lake when here is all we want?"

"But no one ever stops here," I said.

"So much the better; we shall have it all to ourselves."

"But we must at least have a roof over our heads."

"I presume we can find one."

The captain of the steamer, however, knew of no roof save that covering a little light-house set on spiles, which the boat would pass within the half-hour; we decided to get off there, and throw ourselves upon the charity of the light-house man. In the mean time, we sat on the bow with Captain Kidd, our four-legged companion, who had often accompanied us on hunting expeditions, but never before so far westward. It had been rough on Lake Erie—very rough. We, who had sailed the ocean with composure, found ourselves most inhumanly tossed on the short, chopping waves of this fresh-water sea; we, who alone of all the cabin-list had eaten our four courses and dessert every day on the ocean-steamer, found ourselves here reduced to the depressing diet of a herring and pilot-bread. Captain Kidd, too, had suffered dumbly; even now he could not find comfort, but tried every plank in the deck, one after the other, circling round and round after his tail, dog-fashion, before lying down, and no sooner down than up again for another melancholy wandering about the deck, another choice of planks, another circling, and another failure. We were sailing across a small lake whose smooth waters were like clear green oil; as we drew near the outlet, the low, green shores curved inward and came together, and the steamer entered a narrow, green river.

"Here we are," said Raymond. "Now we can soon land."

"But there isn't any land," I answered.

"What is that, then," asked my near-sighted companion, pointing toward what seemed a shore.

"Reeds."

"And what do they run back to?"

"Nothing."

"But there must be solid ground beyond?"

"Nothing but reeds, flags, lily-pads, grass, and water, as far as I can see."

"A marsh?"

"Yes, a marsh."

The word marsh does not bring up a beautiful picture to the mind, and yet the reality was as beautiful as any thing I have ever seen—an enchanted land, whose memory haunts me as an idea unwritten; a melody unsung, a picture unpainted, haunts the artist, and will not away. On each side and in front, as far as the eye could reach, stretched the low, green land which was yet no land, intersected by hundreds of channels, narrow and broad, whose waters were green as their shores. In and out, now running into each other for a moment, now setting off each for himself again, these many channels flowed along with a rippling current; zigzag as they were, they never seemed to loiter, but, as if knowing just where they were going, and what they had to do, they found time to take their own pleasant roundabout way, visiting the secluded households of their friends the flags, who, poor souls, must always stay at home. These currents were as clear as crystal, and green as the water-grasses that fringed their miniature shores. The bristling reeds, like companies of free-lances, rode boldly out here and there into the deeps, trying to conquer more territory for the grasses, but the currents were hard to conquer; they dismounted the free-lances, and flowed over their submerged heads; they beat them down with assaulting ripples; they broke their backs so effectually that the bravest had no spirit left, but trailed along, limp and bedraggled. And, if by chance the lances succeeded in stretching their forces across from one little shore to another, then the unconquered

currents forced their way between the closely-serried ranks of the enemy, and flowed on as gayly as ever, leaving the grasses sitting hopeless on the bank; for they needed solid ground for their delicate feet, these graceful ladies in green.

You might call it a marsh; but there was no mud, no dark, slimy water, no stagnant scum; there were no rank, yellow lilies, no gormandizing frogs, no swinish mud-turtles. The clear waters of the channels ran over golden sands, and hurtled among the stiff reeds so swiftly that only in a bay, or where protected by a crescent point, could the fair, white lilies float in the quiet their serene beauty requires. The flags, who brandished their swords proudly, were martinets down to their very heels, keeping themselves as clean under the water as above, and harboring not a speck of mud on their bright-green uniforms. For inhabitants, there were small fish roving about here and there in the clear tide, keeping an eye out for the herons, who, watery as to legs, but venerable and wise of aspect, stood on promontories musing, apparently, on the secrets of the ages.

The steamer's route was a constant curve; through the larger channels of the archipelago she wound, as if following the clew of a labyrinth. By turns she headed toward all the points of the compass, finding a channel where, to our uninitiated eyes, there was no channel, doubling upon her own track, going broadside foremost, floundering and backing, like a whale caught in a shallow. Here, landlocked, she would choose what seemed the narrowest channel of all, and dash recklessly through, with the reeds almost brushing her sides; there she crept gingerly along a broad expanse of water, her paddle-wheels scarcely revolving, in the excess of her caution. Saplings, with their heads of foliage on, and branches adorned with fluttering rags, served as finger-posts to show the way through the watery defiles, and there were many other hieroglyphics legible only to the pilot. "This time, surely, we shall run ashore," we thought again and again, as the steamer glided, head-on, toward an islet; but at the last there was always a quick turn into some unseen strait opening like a secret passage in a castle-wall, and we found ourselves in a new lakelet, heading in the opposite direction. Once we met another steamer, and the two great hulls floated slowly past each other, with engines motionless, so near that the passengers could have shaken hands with each other had they been so disposed. Not that they were so disposed, however; far from it. They gathered on their respective decks and gazed at each other gravely; not a smile was seen, not a word spoken, not the shadow of a salutation given. It was not pride, it was not suspicion; it was the universal listlessness of the traveling American bereft of his business, Othello with his occupation gone. What can such a man do on a steamer? Generally, nothing. Certainly he would never think of any such light-hearted nonsense as a smile or passing bow.

But the ships were, *par excellence*, the bewitched craft, the Flying Dutchmen of the Flats. A brig, with lofty, sky-scraping sails, bound south, came into view of our steamer, bound north, and passed, we hugging the shore to give her room; five minutes afterward the sky-scraping sails we had left behind veered around in front of us again; another five minutes, and there they were far distant on the right; another, and there they were again close by us on the left. For half an hour those sails circled around us, and yet all the time we were pushing steadily forward; this seemed witching work indeed. Again, the numerous schooners thought nothing of sailing overland; we saw them on all sides gliding before the wind, or beating up against it over the meadows as easily as over the water; sailing on grass was a mere trifle to these spirit-barks. All this we saw, as I said before, apparently. But in that adverb is hidden the magic of the St. Clair Flats.

"It is beautiful—beautiful," I said, looking off over the vivid green expanse.

"Beautiful?" echoed the captain, who had himself taken charge of the steering when the steamer entered the labyrinth—"I don't see any thing beautiful in it!—Port your helm up there; port!"

"Port it is, sir," came back from the pilot-house above. "These Flats give us more trouble than any other spot on the lakes; vessels are all the time getting aground and blocking up the way, which is narrow enough at best. There's some talk of Uncle Sam's cutting a canal right through — a straight canal; but he's so slow, Uncle Sam is, and I'm afraid I'll be off the waters before the job is done."

"A straight canal!" I repeated, thinking, with dismay, of an ugly, utilitarian ditch invading this beautiful, winding waste of green.

"Yes, you can see for yourself what a saving it would be," replied the captain. "We could run right through in no time, day or night; whereas, now, we have to turn and twist and watch every inch of the whole everlasting marsh." Such was the captain's opinion. But we, albeit neither romantic nor artistic, were captivated with his "everlasting marsh," and eager to penetrate far within its green fastnesses.

"I suppose there are other families living about here, besides the family at the light-house?" I said.

"Never heard of any. They'd have to live on a raft if they did."

"But there must be some solid ground."

"Don't believe it; it's nothing but one great sponge for miles. — Steady up there; steady!"

"Very well," said Raymond, "so be it. If there is only the light-house, at the light-house we'll get off, and take our chances."

"You're surveyors, I suppose?" said the captain.

Surveyors are the pioneers of the lake-country, understood by the people to be a set of harmless monomaniacs, given to building little observatories along-shore, where there is nothing to observe; mild madmen, whose vagaries and instruments are equally singular. As surveyors, therefore, the captain saw nothing surprising in our determination to get off at the light-house; if we had proposed going ashore on a plank in the middle of Lake Huron, he would have made no objection.

At length the light-house came into view, a little fortress perched on spiles, with a ladder for entrance; as usual in small houses, much time seemed devoted to washing, for a large crane, swung to and fro by a rope, extended out over the water, covered with fluttering garments hung out to dry. The steamer lay-to, our row-boat was launched, our traps handed out, Captain Kidd took his place in the bow, and we pushed off into the shallows; then the great paddle-wheels revolved again, and the steamer sailed away, leaving us astern, rocking on her waves, and watched listlessly by the passengers until a turn hid us from their view. In the mean time, numerous flaxen-haired children had appeared at the little windows of the light-house — too many of them, indeed, for our hopes of comfort.

"Ten," said Raymond, counting heads.

The ten, moved by curiosity as we approached, hung out of the windows so far that they held on merely by their ankles.

"We cannot possibly save them all," I remarked, looking up at the dangling gazers.

"Oh, they're amphibious," said Raymond; "web-footed, I presume."

We rowed up under the fortress, and demanded parley with the keeper in the following language:

"Is your father here?"

"No; but ma is," answered the chorus. —"Ma! ma!"

Ma appeared, a portly female, who held converse with us from the top of the ladder. The sum and substance of the dialogue was that she had not a corner to give us, and recommended us to find Liakim, and have him show us the way to Waiting Samuel's.

"Waiting Samuel's?" we repeated.

"Yes; he's a kind of crazy man living away over there in the Flats. But there's no harm in him, and his wife is a tidy housekeeper. You be surveyors, I suppose?"

We accepted the imputation in order to avoid a broadside of questions, and asked the whereabouts of Liakim.

"Oh, he's round the point, somewhere there, fishing."

We rowed on and found him, a little, round-shouldered man, in an old flat-bottomed boat, who had not taken a fish, and looked as though he never would. We explained our errand.

"Did Rosabel Lee tell ye to come to me?" he asked.

"The woman in the light-house told us," I said.

"That's Rosabel Lee, that's my wife; I'm Liakim Lee," said the little man, gathering together his forlorn old rods and tackle, and pulling up his anchor.

> "In the kingdom down by the sea,
> Lived the beautiful Annabel Lee,"

I quoted, *sotto voce*.

"And what very remarkable feet had she!" added Raymond, improvising under the inspiration of certain shoes, scow-like in shape, gigantic in length and breadth, which had made themselves visible at the top round of the ladder.

At length the shabby old boat got under

way, and we followed in its path, turning off to the right through a net-work of channels, now pulling ourselves along by the reeds, now paddling over a raft of lily-pads, now poling through a winding labyrinth, and now rowing with broad sweeps across a little lake. The sun was sinking, and the western sky grew bright at his coming; there was not a cloud to make mountain-peaks on the horizon, nothing but the level earth below meeting the curved sky above, so evenly and clearly that it seemed as though we could go out there and touch it with our hands. Soon we lost sight of the little light-house; then one by one the distant sails sank down and disappeared, and we were left alone on the grassy sea, rowing toward the sunset.

"We must have come a mile or two, and there is no sign of a house," I called out to our guide.

"Well, I don't pretend to know how far it is, exactly," replied Liakim; "we don't know how far any thing is here in the Flats, we don't."

"But are you sure you know the way?"

"Oh my, yes! We've got most to the boy. There it is!"

The "boy" was a buoy, a fragment of plank painted white, part of the cabin-work of some wrecked steamer.

"Now, then," said Liakim, pausing, "you jest go straight on in this here channel till you come to the ninth run from this boy, on the right; take that, and it will lead you right up to Waiting Samuel's door."

"Aren't you coming with us?"

"Well, no. In the first place, Rosabel Lee will be waiting supper for me, and she don't like to wait; and, besides, Samuel can't abide to see none of us round his part of the Flats."

"But—" I began.

"Let him go," interposed Raymond; "we can find the house without trouble," and he tossed a silver dollar to the little man, who was already turning his boat.

"Thank you," said Liakim. "Be sure you take the ninth run and no other—the ninth run from this boy. If you make any mistake, you'll find yourselves miles away." With this cheerful statement, he began to row back. I did not altogether fancy being left on the watery waste without a guide; the name, too, of our mythic host did not bring up a certainty of supper and beds. "Waiting Samuel," I repeated, doubtfully. "What is he waiting for?" I called back over my shoulder; for Raymond was rowing.

"The judgment-day!" answered Liakim, in a shrill key. The boats were now far apart; another turn, and we were alone.

We glided on, counting the runs on the right: some were wide, promising rivers; others wee little rivulets; the eighth was far away, and, when we had passed it, we could hardly decide whether we had reached the ninth or not, so small was the opening, so choked with weeds, showing scarcely a gleam of water beyond when we stood up to inspect it.

"It is certainly the ninth, and I vote that we try it. It will do as well as another, and I, for one, am in no hurry to arrive anywhere," said Raymond, pushing the boat in among the reeds.

"Do you want to lose yourself in this wilderness?" I asked, making a flag of my handkerchief to mark the spot where we had left the main stream.

"I think we are lost already," was the calm reply. I began to fear we were.

For some distance the "run," as Liakim called it, continued choked with aquatic vegetation, which acted like so many devil-fish catching our oars; at length it widened and gradually gave us a clear channel, albeit so winding and erratic that the glow of the sunset, our only beacon, seemed to be executing a waltz all round the horizon. At length, we saw a dark spot on the left, and distinguished the outline of a low house. "There it is," I said, plying my oars with renewed strength. But the run turned short off in the opposite direction, and the house disappeared. After some time it rose again, this time on our right, but once more the run turned its back and shot off on a tangent. The sun had gone, and the rapid twilight of September was falling around us; the air, however, was singularly clear, and, as there was absolutely nothing to make a shadow, the darkness came on evenly over the level green. I was growing anxious, when a third time the house appeared, but the willful run passed by it, although so near that we could distinguish its open windows and door. "Why not get out and wade across?" I suggested.

"According to Liakim, it is the duty of this run to take us to the very door of Waiting Samuel's mansion, and it shall take us," said Raymond, rowing on. It did. Doubling upon itself in the most unexpected manner, it brought us back to a little island, where the tall grass had given way to a vegetable-garden. We landed, secured our boat, and walked up the pathway toward the house. In the dusk it seemed to be a low, square structure, built of planks covered with plaster; the roof was flat, the windows unusually broad, the door stood open—but no one appeared. We knocked. A voice from within called out: "Who are you, and what do you want with Waiting Samuel?"

"Pilgrims, asking for food and shelter," replied Raymond.

"Do you know the ways of righteousness?"

"We can learn them."

"Will you conform to the rules of this household without murmuring?"

"We will."

"Enter then, and peace be with you!" said the voice, drawing nearer. We stepped cautiously through the dark passage into a room, whose open windows let in sufficient twilight to show us a shadowy figure. "Seat yourselves," it said. We found a bench, and sat down.

"What seek ye here?" continued the shadow.

"Rest!" replied Raymond.

"Hunting and fishing!" I added.

"Ye will find more than rest," said the voice, ignoring me altogether (I am often ignored in this way), "more than rest, if ye stay long enough, and learn of the hidden treasures. Are you willing to seek for them?"

"Certainly!" said Raymond. "Where shall we dig?"

"I speak not of earthly digging, young man. Will you give me the charge of your souls?"

"Certainly, if you will also take charge of our bodies."

"Supper, for instance," I said, again coming to the front; "and beds."

The shadow groaned; then it called out wearily, "Roxana!"

"Yes, Samuel," replied an answering voice, and a second shadow became dimly visible on the threshold. "The woman will attend to your earthly concerns," said Waiting Samuel.—"Roxana, take them hence." The second shadow came forward, and, without a word, took our hands and led us along the dark passage like two children, warning us now of a step, now of a turn, then of two steps, and finally opening a door and ushering us into a fire-lighted room. Peat was burning upon the wide hearth, and a singing kettle hung above it on a crane; the red glow shone on a rough table, chairs cushioned in bright calico, a loud-ticking clock, a few gayly-flowered plates and cups on a shelf, shining tins against the plastered wall, and a cat dozing on a bit of carpet in one corner. The cheery domestic scene, coming after the wide, dusky Flats, the silence, the darkness, and the mystical words of the shadowy Samuel, seemed so real and pleasant that my heart grew light within me.

"What a bright fire!" I said. "This is your domain, I suppose, Mrs.—Mrs.—"

"I am not Mrs.; I am called Roxana," replied the woman, busying herself at the hearth.

"Ah, you are then the sister of Waiting Samuel, I presume?"

"No! I am his wife, fast enough; we were married by the minister twenty years ago. But that was before Samuel had seen any visions."

"Does he see visions?"

"Yes, almost every day."

"Do you see them, also?"

"Oh, no; I'm not like Samuel. He has great gifts, Samuel has! The visions told us to come here; we used to live away down in Maine."

"Indeed! That was a long journey!"

"Yes! And we didn't come straight, either. We'd get to one place and stop, and I'd think we were going to stay, and just get things comfortable, when Samuel would see another vision, and we'd have to start on. We wandered in that way two or three years, but at last we got here, and something in the Flats seemed to suit the spirits, and they let us stay."

At this moment, through the half-open door, came a voice:

"An evil beast is in this house. Let him depart."

"Do you mean me?" said Raymond, who had made himself comfortable in a rocking-chair.

"Nay; I refer to the four-legged beast," continued the voice. "Come forth, Apollyon!"

Poor Captain Kidd seemed to feel that he was the person in question, for he hastened under the table with drooping tail and mortified aspect.

"Roxana, send forth the beast," said the voice.

The woman put down her dishes and went toward the table; but I interposed.

"If he must go, I will take him," I said, rising.

"Yes; he must go," replied Roxana, holding open the door. So I ordered out the unwilling captain, and led him into the passage-way.

"Out of the house, out of the house," said Waiting Samuel. "His feet may not rest upon this sacred ground. I must take him hence in the boat."

"But where?"

"Across the channel there is an islet large enough for him; he shall have food and shelter, but here he cannot abide," said the man, leading the way down to the boat.

The captain was therefore ferried across, a tent was made for him out of some old mats, food was provided, and, lest he should swim back, he was tethered by a long rope, which allowed him to prowl around his domain and take his choice of three runs for drinking-water. With all these advantages, the ungrateful animal persisted in howling dismally as we rowed away. It was company he wanted, and not a "dear little isle of his own;" but then he was not, by nature, poetical.

"You do not like dogs?" I said, as we reached our strand again.

"St. Paul wrote, 'beware of dogs,'" replied Samuel.

"But did he mean—"

"I argue not with unbelievers; his meaning is clear to me, let that suffice," said my strange host, turning away and leaving me to find my way back alone. A delicious repast was awaiting me. Years have gone by, the world and all its delicacies have been unrolled before me, but the memory of the meals I ate in that little kitchen in the Flats haunts me still. That night it was only fish, potatoes, biscuits, butter, stewed fruit, and coffee; but the fish was fresh, and done to the turn of a perfect broil, not burn; the potatoes were fried to a rare, crisp, yet tender perfection, not chippy brittleness; the biscuits were light, flaked creamily, and brown on the bottom; the butter freshly churned, without salt; the fruit, great pears, with their cores extracted, standing whole on their dish, ready to melt, but not melted; and the coffee clear and strong, with yellow cream and the old-fashioned, unadulterated loaf-sugar, now passed away. We ate. That does not express it; we devoured. Roxana waited on us, and warmed up into something like excitement under our praises.

"I *do* like good cooking," she confessed. "It's about all I have left of my old life. I go over to the main-land for supplies, and in the winter I try all kinds of new things to pass away the time. But Samuel is a poor eater, he is; and so there isn't much comfort in it. I'm mighty glad you've come, and I hope you'll stay as long as you find it pleasant."—This we promised to do, as we finished the potatoes, and attacked the great jellied pears. "There's one thing, though," continued Roxana; "you'll have to come to our service on the roof at sunrise."

"What service?" I asked.

"The invocation. Dawn is a holy time, Samuel says, and we always wait for it; 'before the morning watch,' you know—it says so in the Bible. Why, my name means 'the dawn,' Samuel says; that's the reason he gave it to me. My real name, down in Maine, was Maria—Maria Ann."

"But I may not wake in time," I said.

"Samuel will call you."

"And if, in spite of that, I should sleep over?"

"You would not do that; it would vex him," replied Roxana, calmly.

"Do you believe in these visions, madam," asked Raymond, as we left the table, and seated ourselves in front of the dying fire.

"Yes," said Roxana; emphasis was unnecessary—of course she believed.

"How often do they come?"

"Almost every day there is a spiritual presence, but it does not always speak. They come and hold long conversations in the winter, when there is nothing else to do; that, I think, is very kind of them, for in the summer Samuel can fish, and his time is more occupied. There were fishermen in the Bible, you know; it is a holy calling."

"Does Samuel ever go over to the main-land?"

"No, he never leaves the Flats. I do all the business; take over the fish, and buy the supplies. I bought all our cattle," said Roxana, with pride. "I poled them away over here on a raft, one by one, when they were little things."

"Where do you pasture them?"

"Here, on the island; there are only a few acres, to be sure; but I can cut boat-loads of the best feed within a stone's throw. If we only had a little more solid ground! But this island is almost the only solid piece in the Flats."

"Your butter is certainly delicious."

"Yes, I do my best. It is sold to the steamers and vessels as fast as I make it."

"You keep yourself busy, I see."

"Oh, I like to work; I couldn't get on without it."

"And Samuel?"

"He is not like me," replied Roxana. "He has great gifts, Samuel has. I often think how strange it is that I should be the wife of such a holy man! He is very kind to me, too; he tells me about the visions, and all the other things."

"What things?" said Raymond.

"The spirits, and the sacred influence of the sun; the fiery triangle, and the thousand years of joy. The great day is coming, you know; Samuel is waiting for it."

"Nine of the night. Take thou thy rest. I will lay me down in peace, and sleep, for it is thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety," chanted a voice in the hall; the tone was deep and not without melody, and the words singularly impressive in that still, remote place.

"Go," said Roxana, instantly pushing aside her half-washed dishes. "Samuel will take you to your room."

"Do you leave your work unfinished?" I said, with some curiosity, noticing that she had folded her hands without even hanging up her towels.

"We do nothing after the evening chant," she said. "Pray go; he is waiting."

"Can we have candles?"

"Waiting Samuel allows no false lights in his house; as imitations of the glorious sun, they are abominable to him. Go, I beg."

She opened the door, and we went into the passage; it was entirely dark, but the man led us across to our room, showed us the position of our beds by sense of feeling, and left us without a word. After he had gone, we struck matches, one by one, and, with the aid of their uncertain light, managed to get into our respective mounds in safety; they were shake-downs on the floor, made of fragrant hay instead of straw, covered with clean sheets and patchwork coverlids, and provided with large, luxurious pillows. O pillow! Has any one sung thy praises? When tired or sick, when discouraged or sad, what gives so much comfort as a pillow? Not your curled-hair brickbats; not your stiff, fluted, rasping covers, or limp cotton cases; but a good, generous, soft pillow, deftly cased in smooth, cool, untrimmed linen! There's a friend for you, a friend who changes not, a friend who soothes all your troubles with a soft caress, a mesmeric touch of balmy forgetfulness.

I slept a dreamless sleep. Then I heard a voice borne toward me as if coming from far over a sea, the waves bringing it nearer and nearer.

"Awake!" it cried; "awake! The night is far spent; the day is at hand. Awake!"

I wondered vaguely over this voice as to what manner of voice it might be, but it came again and again, and finally I awoke to find it at my side. The gray light of dawn came through the open windows, and Raymond was already up, engaged with a tub of water and crash towels. Again the chant sounded in my ears.

"Very well, very well," I said, testily. "But if you sing before breakfast you'll cry before night, Waiting Samuel."

Our host had disappeared, however, without hearing my flippant speech, and slowly I rose from my fragrant couch; the room was empty save for our two mounds, two tubs of water, and a number of towels hanging on nails. "Not overcrowded with furniture," I remarked.

"From Maine to Florida, from Massachusetts to Missouri have I traveled, and never before found water enough," said Raymond. "If waiting for the judgment-day raises such liberal ideas of tubs and towels, I would that all the hotel-keepers in the land could be convened here to take a lesson."

Our green hunting-clothes were soon donned, and we went out into the hall; a flight of broad steps led up to the roof; Roxana appeared at the top and beckoned us thither. We ascended, and found ourselves on the flat roof. Samuel stood with his face toward the east and his arms outstretched, watching the horizon; behind was Roxana, with her hands clasped on her breast and her head bowed; thus they waited. The eastern sky was bright with golden light; rays shot upward toward the zenith, where the rose-lights of dawn were retreating down to the west, which still lay in the shadow of night;

there was not a sound; the Flats stretched out below, dusky and still. Two or three minutes passed, and then a dazzling rim appeared above the horizon, and the first gleam of sunshine was shed over the level earth; simultaneously the two began a chant, simple as a Gregorian, but rendered in correct full tones. The words, apparently, had been collected from the Bible:

"The heavens declare the glory of God—
Joy cometh in the morning!
In them is laid out the path of the sun—
Joy cometh in the morning!
As a bridegroom goeth he forth;
As a strong man runneth his race.
The outgoings of the morning
Praise thee, O Lord!
Like a pelican in the wilderness,
Like a sparrow upon the house-top,
I wait for the Lord.
It is good that we hope and wait,
Wait—wait."

The chant over, the two stood a moment silently, as if in contemplation, and then descended, passing us without a word or sign, with their hands clasped before them as though forming part of an unseen procession. Raymond and I were left alone upon the house-top.

"After all, it is not such a bad opening for a day; and there is the pelican of the wilderness to emphasize it," I said, as a heron flew up from the water, and, slowly flapping his great wings, sailed across to another channel. As the sun rose higher, the birds began to sing; first a single note here and there, then a little trilling solo, and finally an outpouring of melody on all sides—land-birds and water-birds, birds that lived in the Flats, and birds that had flown thither for breakfast—the whole waste was awake and rejoicing in the sunshine.

"What a wild place it is!" said Raymond. "How boundless it looks! One hill in the distance, one dark line of forest, even one tree, would break its charm. I have seen the ocean, I have seen the prairies, I have seen the great desert, but this is like a mixture of the three. It is an ocean full of land—a prairie full of water—a desert full of verdure."

"Whatever it is, we shall find in it fishing and aquatic hunting to our hearts' content," I answered.

And we did. After a breakfast delicious as the supper, we took our boat and a lunch-basket, and set out. "But how shall we ever find our way back?" I said, pausing as I recalled the net-work of runs, and the will-o'-the-wisp aspect of the house, the previous evening.

"There is no other way but to take a large ball of cord and let it run out over the stern of the boat," said Roxana. "Let it run out loosely, and it will float on the water. When you want to come back you can turn around and wind it in as you come. *I* can read the Flats like a book, but they're very blinding to most people; and you might keep going round in a circle. You will do better not to go far, anyway. I'll wind the bugle on the roof an hour before sunset; you can start back when you hear it; for it's awkward getting supper after dark." With this musical promise we took the clew of twine which Roxana rigged for us in the stern of our boat, and started away, first releasing Captain Kidd, who was pacing his islet in sullen majesty, like another Napoleon on St. Helena. We took a new channel and passed behind the house, where the imported cattle were feeding in their little pasture; but the winding stream soon bore us away, the house sank out of sight, and we were left alone.

We had fine sport that morning among the ducks—wood, teal, and canvas-back—shooting from behind our screens woven of rushes; later in the day we took to fishing. The sun shone down, but there was a cool September breeze, and the freshness of the verdure was like early spring. At noon we took our lunch and a *siesta* among the water-lilies. When we awoke we found that a bittern had taken up his position near by, and was surveying us gravely:

"'The moping bittern, motionless and stiff,
That on a stone so silently and stilly
Stands, an apparent sentinel, as if
To guard the water-lily,'"

quoted Raymond. The solemn bird, in his dark uniform, seemed quite undisturbed by our presence; yellow-throats and swamp-sparrows also came in numbers to have a look at us; and the fish swam up to the surface and eyed us curiously. Lying at ease in the boat, we in our turn looked down into the water. There is a singular fascination in looking down into a clear stream as the boat floats above; the mosses and twining water-plants seem to have arbors and grottoes in their recesses, where delicate marine creatures might live, naiads and mermaids of miniature size; at least we are always looking for them. There is a fancy, too, that one may find something—a ring dropped from fair fingers idly trailing in the water—a book which the fishes have read thoroughly—a scarf caught among the lilies—a spoon with unknown initials—a drenched ribbon, or an embroidered handkerchief. None of these things did we find, but we did discover an old brass breastpin, whose probable glass stone was gone. It was a paltry trinket at best, but I fished it out with superstitious care—a treasure-trove of the Flats. "'Drowned,'" I said, pathetically, "'drowned in her white robes—'"

"And brass breastpin," added Raymond, who objected to sentiment, true or false.

"You Philistine! Is nothing sacred to you?"

"Not brass jewelry, certainly."

"Take some lilies and consider them," I said, plucking several of the queenly blossoms floating alongside:

"Cleopatra art thou, regal blossom,
Floating in thy galley down the Nile—
All my soul does homage to thy splendor,
All my heart grows warmer in thy smile;
Yet thou smilest for thine own grand pleasure,
Caring not for all the world beside,
As in insolence of perfect beauty,
Sailest thou in silence down the tide.

"Loving, humble rivers all pursue thee,
Wasted are their kisses at thy feet;
Fiery sun himself cannot subdue thee,
Calm thou smilest through his raging heat;
Naught to thee the earth's great crowd of blossoms,
Naught to thee the rose-queen on her throne;
Haughty empress of the summer waters,
Livest thou, and diest, all alone."

This from Raymond.

"Where did you find that?" I asked.

"It is my own."

"Of course! I might have known it. There is a certain rawness of style and versification which—"

"That's right," interrupted Raymond; "I know just what you are going to say. The whole matter of opinion is a game of 'follow-my-leader;' not one of you dares admire any thing unless the critics say so. If I had told you the verses were by somebody instead of a nobody, you would have found wonderful beauties in them."

"Exactly. My motto is, 'Never read any thing unless it is by a somebody.' For, don't you see, that a nobody, if he is worth any thing, will soon grow into a somebody, and, if he isn't worth any thing, you will have saved your time!"

"But it is not merely a question of growing," said Raymond; "it is a question of critics."

"No; there you are mistaken. All the critics in the world can neither make nor crush a true poet."

"What is poetry?" said Raymond, gloomily.

At this comprehensive question, the bittern gave a hollow croak, and flew away with his long legs trailing behind him. Probably he was not of an æsthetic turn of mind, and dreaded lest I should give a ramified answer.

Through the afternoon we fished when the fancy struck us, but most of the time we floated idly, enjoying the wild freedom of the watery waste. We watched the infinite varieties of the grasses, feathery, lance-leaved, tufted, drooping, banner-like, the deer's tongue, the wild-celery, and the so-called wild-rice, besides many unknown beauties delicately fringed, as difficult to catch and hold as thistle-down. There were plants journeying to and fro on the water like nomadic tribes of the desert; there were fleets of green leaves floating down the current; and now and then we saw a wonderful flower with scarlet bells, but could never approach near enough to touch it.

At length, the distant sound of the bugle came to us on the breeze, and I slowly wound in the clew, directing Raymond as he pushed the boat along, backing water with the oars. The sound seemed to come from every direction. There was nothing for it to echo against, but, in place of the echo, we heard a long, dying cadence, which sounded on over the Flats fainter and fainter in a sweet, slender note, until a new tone broke forth. The music floated around us, now on one side, now on the other; if it had been our only guide, we should have been completely bewildered. But I wound the cord steadily; and at last suddenly, there before us, appeared the house with Roxana on the roof, her figure outlined against the sky. Seeing us, she played a final salute, and then descended, carrying the imprisoned music with her. . . .

That night we had our supper at sunset. Waiting Samuel had his meals by himself in the front room; "so that in case the spirits come, I shall not be there to hinder them," explained Roxana. "I am not holy, like Samuel; they will not speak before me."

"Do you have your meals apart in the winter, also?" asked Raymond.

"Yes."

"That is not very sociable," I said.

"Samuel never was sociable," replied Roxana. "Only common folks are sociable; but he is different. He has great gifts, Samuel has."

The meal over, we went up on the roof to smoke our cigars in the open air; when the sun had disappeared and his glory had darkened into twilight, our host joined us. He was a tall man, wasted and gaunt, with piercing dark eyes and dark hair, tinged with gray, hanging down upon his shoulders. (Why is it that long hair on the outside is almost always the sign of something wrong in the inside of a man's head?) He wore a black robe like a priest's cassock, and on his head a black skull-cap like the *Faust* of the operatic stage.

"Why were the Flats called St. Clair?" I said; for there is something fascinating to me in the unknown history of the West. "There isn't any," do you say? you, I mean, who are strong in the Punic wars! you, too, who are so well up in Grecian mythology. But there is history, only we don't know it. The story of Lake Huron in the times of the Pharaohs, the story of the Mississippi during the reign of Belshazzar, would be worth hearing. But it is lost! All we can do is to gather together the details of our era—the era when Columbus came to this New World, which was, nevertheless, as old as the world he left behind.

"It was in 1679," began Waiting Samuel, "that La Salle sailed up the Detroit River in his little vessel of sixty tons burden, called the Griffin. He was accompanied by thirty-four men, mostly fur-traders; but there were among them two holy monks, and Father Louis Hennepin, a friar of the Franciscan order. They passed up the river and entered the little lake just south of us, crossing it and these Flats on the 12th of August, which is Saint Clair's day. Struck with the gentle beauty of the scene, they named the waters after their saint, and at sunset sang a *Te Deum* in her honor."

"And who was Saint Clair?"

"Saint Clair, virgin and abbess, born in Italy, in 1193, made superior of a convent by the great Francis, and canonized for her distinguished virtues," said Samuel, as though reading from an encyclopædia.

"Are you a Roman Catholic?" asked Raymond.

"I am every thing; all sincere faith is sacred to me," replied the man. "It is but a question of names."

"Tell us of your religion," said Raymond, thoughtfully; for, in religions, Raymond was something of a polyglot.

"You would hear of my faith? Well, so be it. Your question is the work of spirit influence. Listen, then. The great Creator has sowed immensity with innumerable systems of suns. In one of these systems a spirit forgot that he was a limited, subordinate being, and misused his freedom; how, we know not. He fell, and with him all his kind. A new race was then created for the vacant world, and, according to the fixed purpose of the Creator, each was left free to act for himself; He loves not mere machines. The fallen spirit, envying the new creature called man, tempted him to sin. What was his sin? Simply the giving up of his birthright, the divine soul-sparkle, for a promise of earthly pleasure. The triune divine deep, the mysterious fiery triangle, which, to our finite minds, best represents the Deity, now withdrew his personal presence; the elements, their balance broken, stormed upon man; his body, which was once ethereal, moving by mere volition, now grew heavy; and it was also appointed unto him to die. The race thus darkened, crippled, and degenerate, sank almost to the level of the brutes, the mind-fire alone remaining of all their spiritual gifts. They lived on blindly, and as blindly died. The sun, however, was left to them, a type of what they had lost.

"At length, in the fullness of time, the world-day of four thousand years, which was appointed by the council in heaven for the regiving of the divine and forfeited soul-sparkle, as on the fourth day of creation the great sun was given, there came to earth the earth's compassionate Saviour, who took upon himself our degenerate body, and revivified it with the divine soul-sparkle, who overcame all our temptations, and finally allowed the tinder of our sins to perish in his own painful death upon the cross. Through him our paradise body was restored, it waits for us on the other side of the grave. He showed us what it was like on Mount Tabor, with it he passed through closed doors, walked upon the water, and ruled the elements; so will it be with us. Paradise will come again; this world will, for a thousand years, see its first estate; it will be again the Garden of Eden. America is the great escaping-place; here will the change begin. As it is written, 'Those who escape to my utmost borders.' As the time draws near, the spirits who watch above are permitted to speak to those souls who listen. Of these listening, waiting souls am I; therefore have I withdrawn myself. The sun himself speaks to me, the greatest spirit of all; each morning I watch for his coming; each morning I ask, 'Is it to-day?' Thus do I wait."

"And how long have you been waiting?" I asked.

"I know not; time is nothing to me."

"Is the great day near at hand?" said Raymond.

"Almost at its dawning; the last days are passing."

"How do you know this?"

"The spirits tell me. Abide here, and perhaps they will speak to you also," replied Waiting Samuel.

We made no answer. Twilight had darkened into night, and the Flats had sunk into silence below us. After some moments I turned to speak to our host; but, noiselessly as one of his own spirits, he had departed.

"A strange mixture of Jacob Bœhmen, chiliastic dreams, Christianity, sun-worship, and modern spiritualism," I said. "Much learning hath made the Maine farmer mad."

"Is he mad?" said Raymond. "Sometimes I think we are all mad."

"We should certainly become so if we spent our time in speculations upon subjects clearly beyond our reach. The whole circle of philosophers from Plato down are all the time going round in a circle. As long as we are in the world, I for one propose to keep my feet on solid ground; especially as we have no wings. 'Abide here, and perhaps the spirits will speak to you' did he say? I think very likely they will, and to such good purpose that you won't have any mind left."

"After all, why should not spirits speak to us?" said Raymond, in a musing tone.

As he uttered these words, the mocking laugh of a loon came across the dark waste.

"The very loons are laughing at you," I said, rising. "Come down; there is a chill in the air, composed in equal parts of the Flats, the night, and Waiting Samuel. Come down, man; come down to the warm kitchen and common-sense."

We found Roxana alone by the fire, whose glow was refreshingly real and warm; it was like the touch of a flesh-and-blood hand, after vague dreamings of spirit-companions, cold and intangible at best, with the added suspicion that, after all, they are but creations of our own fancy, and even their spirit-nature fictitious. Prime, the graceful *raconteur* who goes a-fishing, says, "firelight is as much of a polisher in-doors as moonlight outside." It is; but with a different result. The moonlight polishes every thing into romance, the firelight into comfort. We brought up two remarkably easy old chairs in front of the hearth and sat down, Raymond still adrift with his wandering thoughts; I, as usual, making talk out of the present. Roxana sat opposite, knitting in hand, the cat purring at her feet. She was a slender woman, with faded light hair, insignificant features, small, dull blue eyes, and a general aspect which, with every desire to state at its best, I can only call commonplace. Her gown was limp, her hands roughened with work, and there was no collar around her yellow throat. O magic rim of white, great is thy power! With thee, man is civilized; without thee, he becomes at once a savage.

"I am out of pork," remarked Roxana, casually; "I must go over to the main-land to-morrow and get some."

If it had been any thing but pork! In truth, the word did not chime with the mystic conversation of Waiting Samuel. Yes; there was no doubt about it. Roxana's mind was sadly commonplace.

"See what I have found," I said, after awhile, taking out the old breastpin. "The stone is gone; but who knows? It might have been a diamond dropped by some French duchess, exiled, and fleeing for life across these far Western waters; or perhaps that German Princess of Brunswick-Wolfen-something-or-other, who, about one hundred years ago, was dead and buried in Russia, and traveling in America, at the same time, a sort of a female wandering Jew, who has been done up in stories ever since."

(The other day, in Bret Harte's "Melons," I saw the following: "The singular conflicting conditions of John Brown's body and soul were, at that time, beginning to attract the attention of American youth." That is good, isn't it? Well, at the time I visited

the Flats, the singular conflicting conditions of the Princess of Brunswick-Wolfen-something-or-other had, for a long time, haunted me,)

Roxana's small eyes were near-sighted; she peered at the empty setting, but said nothing.

"It is water-logged," I continued, holding it up in the firelight, "and it hath a brassy odor; nevertheless, I feel convinced that it belonged to the princess."

Roxana leaned forward and took the trinket; I lifted up my arms and gave a mighty stretch, one of those enjoyable lengthenings-out which belong only to the healthy fatigue of country life. When I drew myself in again, I was surprised to see Roxana's features working, and her rough hands trembling, as she held the battered setting.

"It was mine," she said; "my dear old cameo breastpin that Abby gave me when I was married. I saved it and saved it, and wouldn't sell it, no matter how low we got, for someway it seemed to tie me to home and baby's grave. I used to wear it when I had baby—I had neck-ribbons then; we had things like other folks, and on Sundays we went to the old meeting-house on the green. Baby is buried there—O baby, baby!" and the voice broke into sobs.

"You lost a child?" I said, pitying the sorrow which was, which must be, so lonely, so unshared.

"Yes. O baby! baby" cried the woman, in a wailing tone. "It was a little boy, gentlemen, and it had curly hair, and could just talk a word or two; its name was Ethan, after father, but we all called it Robin. Father was mighty proud of Robin, and mother, too. It died, gentlemen, my baby died, and I buried it in the old church-yard near the thorn-tree. But still I thought to stay there always along with mother and the girls; I never supposed any thing else, until Samuel began to see visions. Then, every thing was different, and everybody against us; for, you see, I would marry Samuel, and when he left off working, and began to talk to the spirits, the folks all said, 'I told yer so, Maria Ann!' Samuel wasn't of Maine stock exactly: his father was a sailor, and 'twas suspected that his mother was some kind of an East-Injia woman, but no one knew. His father died and left the boy on the town, so he lived round from house to house until he got old enough to hire out. Then he came to our farm, and there he stayed. He had wonderful eyes, Samuel had, and he had a way with him—well, the long and short of it was, that I got to thinking about him, and couldn't think of any thing else. The folks didn't like it at all, for, you see, there was Adam Rand, who had a farm of his own over the hill; but I never could bear Adam Rand. The worst of it was, though, that Samuel never so much as looked at me, hardly. Well, it got to be the second year, and Susan, my younger sister, married Adam Rand. Adam, he thought he'd break up my nonsense, that's what they called it, and so he got a good place for Samuel away down in Connecticut, and Samuel said he'd go, for he was always restless, Samuel was. When I heard it, I was ready to lie down and die. I ran out into the pasture and threw myself down by the fence like a crazy woman. Samuel happened to come by along the lane, and saw me; he was always kind to all the dumb creatures, and stopped to see what was the matter, just as he would have stopped to help a calf. It all came out then, and he was awful sorry for me. He sat down on the top bar of the fence and looked at me, and I sat on the ground a-crying, with my hair down, and my face all red and swollen.

"'I never thought to marry, Maria Ann,' says he.

"'Oh, please do, Samuel,' says I, 'I'm a real good house-keeper, I am, and we can have a little land of our own, and every thing nice—'

"'But I wanted to go away. My father was a sailor,' he began, a-looking away off toward the ocean.

"'Oh, I can't stand it—I can't stand it,' says I, beginning to cry again. Well, after that he 'greed to stay at home and marry me, and the folks they had to give in to it when they saw how I felt. We were married on Thanksgiving-day, and I wore a pink delaine, purple neckribbon, and this very breastpin that sister Abby gave me—it cost four dollars, and came 'way from Boston. Mother kissed me, and said she hoped I'd be happy.

"'Of course I shall, mother,' says I. 'Samuel has great gifts; he isn't like common folks.'

"'But common folks is a deal comfortabler,' says mother. The folks never understood Samuel.

"Well, we had a chirk little house and bit of land, and baby came, and was so cunning and pretty. The visions had begun to appear then, and Samuel said he must go.

"'Where?' says I.

"'Anywhere the spirits lead me,' says he.

"But baby couldn't travel, and so it hung along; Samuel left off work, and every thing ran down to loose ends; I did the best I could, but it wasn't much. Then baby died, and I buried him under the thorn-tree, and the visions came thicker and thicker, and Samuel told me as how this time he must go. The folks wanted me to stay behind without him; but they never understood me nor him. I could no more leave him than I could fly; I was just wrapped up in him. So we went away; I cried dreadfully when it came to leaving the folks and Robin's little grave, but I had so much to do after we got started, that there wasn't time for any thing but work. We thought to settle in ever so many places, but after a while there would always come a vision, and I'd have to sell out and start on. The little money we had was soon gone, and then I went out for days' work, and picked up any work I could get. But many's the time we were cold, and many's the time we were hungry, gentlemen. The visions kept coming, and by-and-by I got to like 'em too. Samuel he told me all they said when I came home nights, and it was nice to hear all about the thousand years of joy, when there'd be no more trouble, and when Robin would come back to us again. Only I told Samuel that I hoped the world wouldn't alter much, because I wanted to go back to Maine for a few days, and see all the old places. Father and mother are dead, I suppose," said Roxana, looking up at us with a pathetic expression in her small dull eyes. Beautiful eyes are doubly beautiful in sorrow; but there is something peculiarly pathetic in small dull eyes looking up at you, struggling to express the grief that lies within, like a prisoner behind the bars of his small dull window.

"And how did you lose your breastpin?" I said, coming back to the original subject.

"Samuel found I had it, and threw it away soon after we came to the Flats; he said it was vanity."

"Have you been here long?"

"Oh, yes, years. I hope we shall stay here always now—at least, I mean until the thousand years of joy begin—for it's quiet, and Samuel's more easy here than in any other place. I've got used to the lonely feeling, and don't mind it much now. There's no one near us for miles, except Rosabel Lee and Liakim; they don't come here, for Samuel can't abide 'em, but sometimes I stop there on my way over from the main-land, and have a little chat about the children. Rosabel Lee has got lovely children, she has! They don't stay there in the winter, though; the winters *are* long, I don't deny it."

"What do you do then?"

"Well, I knit and cook, and Samuel reads to me, and has a great many visions."

"He has books, then?"

"Yes, all kinds; he's a great reader, and he has boxes of books about the spirits, and such things."

"Nine of the night. Take thou thy rest. I will lay me down in peace and sleep; for it is thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety," chanted the voice in the hall; and our evening was over.

"What a complete unlikeness!" I said, as we struggled with the difficulties of undressing by match-light.

"Simply the result of such a marriage," replied Raymond. "An ignorant, commonplace woman falls in love with a poetical, imaginative man; we see such cases all around us, both in high life and low. What is the result? Inevitable misery. In this case the man has taken refuge in religious fanaticism. The higher nature always suffers most."

"I disagree with you—I utterly disagree with you," I said, hotly. "Why, this poor woman is heroic, absolutely heroic! Has she not given up her parents, her home, her little household gods, to follow her husband out into this wild, lonely waste? Does she not work while he is idle?"

"Yes, she works; but that is the least she could do after dragging this man down."

"She loved him, you cynic! Where would he be without her?"

"Better off."

"You mean in a lunatic asylum, perhaps; for there is where he would have been, long since, without her tender care. Her love for him is something sublime; her poor, plain face, her dull eyes, and her rough hands, are transformed by it into something higher than beauty. Do you hear what I say, Raymond," I called out; for by this time we were in our respective mounds. No answer. "Very well," I went on, angrily, for Raymond's cynical creed always annoyed me, "all I can say is, Raymond Lowell, that no woman will ever

love *you* as this poor Roxana loves her visionary husband. *You*, at least, will not be troubled by any excessive affection."

Years afterward I found that Raymond had thrown away his love upon a fickle heart. If he could have forgotten her! But he could not; and never did.

At dawn we attended the service on the roof; then, after breakfast, we released Captain Kidd, and started out for another day's sport. We had not rowed far when Roxana passed us, poling her flat-boat rapidly along; she had a load of fish and butter, and was bound for the main-land village. "Bring us back a Detroit paper," I said. She nodded and passed on, stolid and homely in the morning light. Yes, I was obliged to confess to myself that she *was* commonplace.

A glorious day we had on the moors in the rushing September wind. Every thing rustled and waved and danced, and the grass undulated in long billows as far as the eye could see. The wind enjoyed himself like a mad creature; he had no forests to oppose him, no heavy water to roll up—nothing but merry, swaying grasses. It was the west wind—"of all the winds, the best wind." The east wind was given us for our sins; I have long suspected that the east wind was the angel that drove Adam out of paradise. We did nothing that day—nothing but enjoy the rushing breeze. We felt like Bedouins of the desert, with our boat for a steed. "He came flying upon the wings of the wind," is the grandest image of the Hebrew poet.

Late in the afternoon we heard the bugle and returned, following our clew as before. Roxana had brought a late paper, and, opening it, I saw the account of an accident —a yacht run down on the sound and five drowned; five, all near and dear to us. Hastily and sadly we gathered our possessions together; the hunting, the fishing were nothing now; all we thought of was to get away, to go home to the sorrowing ones around the new-made graves. Roxana went with us in her boat to guide us back to the little light-house. Waiting Samuel bade us no farewell, but as we rowed away we saw him standing on the house-top gazing after us. We bowed; he waved his hand; and then turned away to look at the sunset. What were our little affairs to a man who held converse with the spirits!

We rowed in silence. How long, how weary seemed the way! The grasses, the lilies, the silver channels—we no longer even saw them. At length the forward boat stopped. "There's the light-house yonder," said Roxana. "I won't go over there to-night. Mayhap you'd rather not talk, and Rosabel Lee will be sure to talk to me. Good-by." We shook hands, and I laid in the boat a sum of money to help the little household through the winter; then we rowed on toward the light-house. At the turn I looked back; Roxana was sitting motionless in her boat; the dark clouds were rolling up behind her; and the Flats looked wild and desolate. "God help her!" I said.

A steamer passed the light-house and took us off within the hour.

Years rolled away, and I often thought of the grassy sea, and intended to go there; but the intention never grew into reality. In 1870, however, I was traveling westward, and, finding myself at Detroit, a sudden impulse took me up to the Flats. The steamer sailed up the beautiful river and crossed the little lake, both unchanged. But, alas! the canal predicted by the captain fifteen years before had been cut, and, in all its unmitigated ugliness, stretched straight through the enchanted land. I got off at the new and prosaic brick light-house, half expecting to see Liakim and his Rosabel Lee; but they were not there, and no one knew any thing about them. And Waiting Samuel? No one knew any thing about him, either. I took a skiff, and, at the risk of losing myself, I rowed away into the wilderness, spending the day among the silvery channels, which were as beautiful as ever. There were fewer birds; I saw no grave herons, no sombre bitterns, and the fish had grown shy. But the water-lilies were beautiful as of old, and the grasses as delicate and luxuriant. I had scarcely a hope of finding the old house on the island, but late in the afternoon, by a mere chance, I rowed up unexpectedly to its little landing-place. The walls stood firm and the roof was unbroken; I landed and walked up the overgrown path. Opening the door, I found the few old chairs and tables in their places, weather-beaten and decayed, the storms had forced a way within, and the floor was insecure; but the gay crockery was on its shelf, the old tins against the wall, and all looked so natural that I almost feared to find the mortal remains of the husband and wife as I went from room to room. They were not there, however, and the place looked as if it had been uninhabited for years. I lingered in the door-way. What had become of them? Were they dead? Or had a new vision sent them farther toward the setting sun? I never knew, although I made many inquiries. If dead, they were probably lying somewhere under the shining waters; if alive, they must have "folded their tents, like the Arabs, and silently stolen away."

I rowed back in the glow of the evening across the grassy sea. "It is beautiful, beautiful," I thought, "but it is passing away. Already commerce has invaded its borders—a few more years and its loveliness will be but a legend of the past. The bittern has vanished; the loon has fled away. Waiting Samuel was the prophet of the waste; he has gone, and the barriers are broken down. Farewell, beautiful grass-water! No artist has painted, no poet has sung your wild, vanishing charm; but in one heart, at least, you have a place, O lovely land of St. Clair!"

C. F. WOOLSON.

ENGLISH LUNCHEONS.

AN English dinner-party is perhaps the highest form of social entertainment. The splendor of the equipage, of gold, silver, glass, and china; the profusion and excellence of the service; the variety and luxury of the viands; the superb flowers; and the grand dining-room hung round often by ancestral portraits, make a dinner-party in a stately English house a thing to see, to enjoy, and to remember.

The conversation (last, but not least) is often characterized as dull and heavy, but there are brilliant exceptions to this criticism. Undoubtedly an overloaded splendor acts as a check upon the imaginations of those who are either unaccustomed to it, or those to whom it is so much a matter of course that it has become wearisome. The royal family, for instance, who are always put on a species of pedestal and worshiped like Hindoo idols, are said to be very weary of it; and the King of Belgium, a lively and witty man, is said to dread nothing so much as an English state-dinner. But there is a wide ocean between these two extremes, on which float argosies of social pleasure and conversational brilliancy. The English statesman, man of letters, and the English clergy, almost always delightfully accomplished men, never appear better than at dinner. English reserve seems to thaw, the topics of the day are handled with wit and grace, and that immense accumulation of learning, which is the proudest wealth of England's best men and women, reveals itself in the talk of the dinner-table.

During the London season, of course, these dinners are made more agreeable by the presence of foreigners of all nations, a foreign potentate or two, large or little, an Italian patriot, an American poet, a French journalist, a Prussian warrior—in fact, every nation's best, meet at the table of those English who know how to entertain; and entertaining has become second nature to most of those fortunate human beings who are known as the aristocracy of England.

But the dinner, being so stately and formal an affair, so exacting in its requirements of full dress and knowledge of etiquette, can only be agreeable to those persons to whom knowledge of society *is* second nature. The loads of queer celebrities who flock to England, and of whom English people are very fond, are often great bores at the dinner-table. One literary lady of high eminence carried along a husband who drank out of his finger-glass; one French soldier of fortune tore the aspic of plover's eggs, which stood before him, apart with his fingers; one young lady of grasping disposition—I will not say what country she came from—reached for a bouquet from the grand *épergne*, and tipped it over. All these things are trifles, but they did that dreadful thing—they discomposed the lady of the house. So there has grown up a species of entertainment, absolutely necessitated (as I was told by a lady who entertained much) by these very accidents—a luncheon, informal, gay, early, a sort of mid-day dinner, where ladies sit in their bonnets and gentlemen in their morning-coats—not the grand twelve-course affair which we give in New York at one o'clock and call luncheon —but a simple entertainment—a joint of mutton, some fruit and salad, and perhaps claret and madeira, where the entertainment is easy and perfect, and fitted to the enjoyment of everybody.

At these pleasant affairs there can be no particular isolation of etiquette; for there is no etiquette to violate. Every one is at ease. The houses of Parliament do not assemble