THE SALAMANDER:

A Legend for Christmas.

FOUND AMONGST THE PAPERS
OF THE LATE ERNEST HELFENSTEIN.

"The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire."
—BIBLE.

EDITED BY
E. OAKES SMITH.

NEW-YORK:
GEORGE P. PUTNAM, 155 BROADWAY,
LONDON: PUTNAM'S AMERICAN AGENCY,
Removed from Paternoster Row to
J. Chapman, 142 STRAND.

1848.

ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1848.

By GEORGE P. PUTNAM,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New-York.

We subjoin the dedication as left by Helfenstein.—ED.

TO

J. FENNIMORE COOPER.

A man honored in being made the Illustrator of a truth uttered by Him who was the Truth—even that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country—one, whose memory his country will delight to honor, these pages are inscribed by

E. HELFENSTEIN.

PREFACE.

It is not without some misgiving that the Editor presents to the public this unique work of her deceased friend. His early and sudden death has deprived it of those touches and commentaries which may be thought needful to the better understanding of its characteristics. To a mind like his, delighting in the metaphysic, fond of the spiritual, and apt to plunge into those speculations at once so seductive, and to ordinary minds so dangerous, it must be, that shades will be wanting in many others, fully to perceive the phase of things as seen by his own eye. Hence it may follow, that parts of his work may be thought mystical or obscure—the Editor trusts not, and yet has her fears.

The character of Helfenstein was peculiar and its stamp is marked upon his book, which must create a taste for itself, or pass into neglect. When we say that our friend was peculiar, we do not mean to say he had either oddities or eccentricities—these are the infirmities of great minds, but oftener the weaknesses, of little and badly organized ones; on the contrary, Helfenstein was simple, and direct as a child, full of a passionateness of affection and sentiment, with a longing for the ideal, which was at once the joy and the bane of his life. All truths, whether of beauty or character, abstractions or demonstrations, were to him realities—not the theories and playthings of the intellect, but earnest and solemn intimations to guide, to restrain, to elevate and beautify the life, to become the facts of an existence.

The Editor has searched in vain for tradition or authority respecting the history of the Lost Angel; whether it be a story gleaned from the associations of "fader land," a myth with its holy and internal soul—or the romance of a poetic brain, she will not attempt to determine; where he has been silent, it would be unbecoming in her to speak. She can only vouch for the deep reverence pervading its pages for the doctrines of our blessed religion, and though presented in an unaccustomed garb, they may not the less strongly come home to the heart; the simple development of common affection too, may find its own way, and leave the intellect and imagination not disinclined to seize the threads of the supernatural which bind the whole into one.

Brooklyn, L. I., Oct., 1848.

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

INTRODUCTION.

The Editor has been at no inconsiderable pains to ascertain the true region designated in the History of Helfenstein, as Rockland. After much research and observation, bearing in mind the localities of the author, she has determined that what is called the valley of the Ramapo must be the one described. It is true the present aspect of the country does not entirely accord with his description, yet after deducting the natural changes which a period of more than two centuries would be likely to produce, enough still remains to leave but little doubt on the mind of the intelligent reader.

In truth, nothing can be more picturesque, nothing more beautiful, nothing better adapted· to the development of some rare and startling event, than this most lovely valley. Winding between two mountain barriers, it seems shut out from the rest of the world, while its inexhaustible resources of iron give a peculiar character to the manners and pursuits of a primitive population. Looking upon its immense and unwearying forges, its perpetual roar of flame, one is not unwilling to adopt the myth, that here an erring yet benevolent Angel passed his last trial, and found his nearest approach to the human and thence to the gate of God's infinite mercy. Disinclined as our people are to recognize the materials of national literature amongst our own traditions and our own wild and peculiar scenery, it may be feared that the work of my friend, evidently a history current amongst the people whom he visited, will find little favor in their eyes.

The lapse of so many years has without doubt changed not only the features of the valley, but modified also very much the character of the inhabitants. They seem to be the descendants of a mixed race, originally German, Dutch, and French Hugonots, as described in the book. The Editor found the same simplicity, the same unobtrusive piety, and warm hospitality amongst the people, which she had been led to expect from the book of her friend.

She wishes the courtesies of life would justify the grateful impulses of her heart in recording the names of those who are so generously and so genially "given to hospitality;" whose kindly appreciation and sympathy with the objects of her visit, caused her to lose sight of the thrift of the antiquary in the more pleasurable resources of social intercourse. The valley is like a dream-land to her, from which the hardness and selfishness of the great world is excluded, and where the spirits of other days brood amid its mountain shades, and the stirring legends and wild traditions of many a war have given an earnestness and repose to its people, suggestive of all that is most pleasing to the poetic mind. She found whole families who still speak the language of "fader land," and to whom the English is a troublesome vehicle of communication with a stranger. Here, too, the relics of slavery exist in the most patriarchal form. In the family of the Hoppers (she uses this name without scruple, as belonging to history)

were twenty or thirty negroes, a fine, cheerful-looking race, the remnants of the slavery which existed before the state emancipation, free, yet clinging affectionately to the old family. It was picturesque and amusing to see these indolently grouped about, for, in truth, the smallness of their service is only exceeded by the greatness of indulgence with which they are treated by their former owners; these dependants scorn also all language but that in use in days gone by.

It will be recollected that the revolutionary army was three times encamped in this valley—at the same time that departments of it occupied positions at West Point, in defence of the north, and at Morristown, keeping a line of communication open between the northern and southern armies; many vestiges of this period and of one still earlier, earlier even than the records of the Colony of Helfenstein, are still pointed out.

For instance, riding beside a field luxuriant with wheat, we observed a space nearly surrounded by the grain, left in its primitive state, upon which grew a few trees, and an abundance of tall grass and wild flowers. We asked the reason why this spot was left untouched. "It is the Indian burial-ground," was the simple reply. Yes, this little plat, held sacred by this virtuous people, is all that is left to mark the existence of the once powerful tribe of the Ramapaughs. And where else should we find such an association so reverenced? Long before the revolution, they told us, the last burial had been made there, and yet for nearly a century the ploughshare has left it unmolested, and the ashes of warrior, matron, and child, have been respected as they have not been in scarcely another instance throughout our whole country. The sight was most affecting, and we only hope that at some future day a granite column will rise from the spot with the simple inscription, "To the memory of the Ramapaughs."

In a field about a quarter of a mile from the Hopper house is shown an old hemlock tree beneath which the tent of Washington was pitched through three successive campaigns; it is needless to say, that most of his leisure was passed at the hospitable mansion. The original stone building has given place to a more ambitious one of wood; but the long low stone dining room remains entire. Here we were shown the service of pewter used by the family, and from which the father of his country often shared the viands of our hostess; yes, we were hospitably and cordially entertained by an intelligent and dignified matron of ninety-eight, who in the budding of her matron honors had many and oftentimes received the great man to her ample board; her daughter, a cheerful, healthful woman, whose age we will not presume to guess, had been a pet child with the good general, often carried in his arms, and often the sharer of his otherwise lonely walks. We were shown the bed and furniture remaining as when he used them, for the room is kept carefully locked, and only shown as a particular gratification to those interested in all that concerns the man of men. Here were the dark chints hangings beneath which he had slept—the quaint furniture—old walnut cabinets, dark, massive, and richly carved—a Dutch Bible mounted with silver, with clasps and chain of the same material, each bearing the stamp of antiquity, yet all in perfect preservation—large china bowls—antique mugs—paintings upon glass of cherished members of the Orange family. These and other objects of interest remain as at that day.

The ancient matron has none of the garrulity of old age; on the contrary, as she adverted to past scenes, a quiet stateliness grew upon her in beautiful harmony with the subject: rarely will another behold the sight so pleasing to ourselves of five generations, each and all in perfect health and intelligence, under the same roof-tree. She spoke of this with evident satisfaction, and of the length of time her ancestors had been upon the soil; in truth, we had never felt more sensibly the honorableness of gray hairs. We found it difficult to realize that the kindly, considerate, intelligent woman with whom we held such "sweet counsel" was on the threshold of a century, for her thoughts and affections had no touch of dotage, but seemed fresh and buoyant as if the spring-time of life, the dew of her youth, had never deserted the heart. Her manners were simple, impressive, and kindly, with none of the cant and none of the cold melancholy wisdom which is so apt to mar the ministry of age; surely we thought, as we looked upon her peaceful brow, old age thou art not unlovely. There is much, very much more of interest which might be told of this interesting family, so often alluded to in our revolutionary annals. Hopper's farm and Hopper's hospitality have been a frequent theme of remark, and often when the army was impoverished, and disheartened, the seasonable relief afforded by this excellent household must have been as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Innumerable anecdotes are told respecting the goodness and the gentle bearing of Washington. Affecting reminiscences of the attachment of the soldiers to his person, and of his grave, fatherly bearing—his sympathy with their distresses, and his untiring devotion to their needs, and to those of the great cause to which he had devoted his life. One good matron preserves an immense china punch-bowl presented her mother by the hand of Washington. It seems that the good woman in preparing buckwheat cakes for her household one morning, bethought herself to send a portion smoking hot to the tent of the good General, which was most gratefully received. A few days after the encampment broke up, and Washington bequeathed her the bowl now so religiously preserved.

It will be recollected that this was the region of the famous Cow-boys, whose depredations and cruelties have been so thrillingly described by our own Cooper, as well as by the historian. Lawless and unsparing, they were the dread of the inhabitants, who even now scarcely repeat the name without horror. We were shown the house in

which one of their terrible outrages was committed. At that time it was inhabited by a man of twenty-two or three and his young wife, whose beauty is still remembered with admiration, as something so rare and touching that no one could see her without a new sense of loveliness. They still tell of her masses of long beautiful hair, the pride of the young woman, and the wonder of all. The husband was ardent and enthusiastic, devoted to the service of the congressional army, which he often aided by his purse as well as personal service. More than once he had gallantly headed a party against the cowardly and cruel "cow-boys," breaking up their haunts, and subjecting them to the penalties which their atrocities so richly merited. Of course he became a marked man.

One night, by a series of most crafty and successful manoeuvres, they entered the house of the unfortunate man, and that so noiselessly that he and his lovely bride were pinioned before a sound had warned them of the approach of danger. Not a shot was fired, but the young wife became the forced and helpless witness of her husband's cruel death, stabbed through and through by the bayonets of these merciless wretches before her eyes. They went as silently as they came, and in the morning the poor girl was found nearly dead, and her long beautiful hair "turned as white as snow."

We might give many more legends of the sort illustrative of the richness of this valley in all historical and romantic associations. It was here, adown these glens, that the intercepted messenger of Washington passed with dispatches meant to delude Sir Henry Clinton into a belief that New-York was the point of attack designed by the combined French and American forces. At the moment these intercepted documents were published in New-York and the city put into a careful state of defence, the whole forces of Washington were rapidly and silently on their route to Yorktown. This politic stroke of Washington is told with much spirit by many of the older inhabitants of the valley. The Editor heard it from the lips of Mr. P....n, a gentleman of eighty-seven, with a mind still clear and vigorous, who had the incident from Montagner, himself the intercepted messenger. When Washington gave him the package, he carefully pointed out the route designed for him to take, and then resumed his writing, for the great man was busily employed at a small table. Montagner saw at once the way would lead him directly under a battery of the enemy, who at that time held what is called the Clove or Ramapo Pass. He remained at the door hesitating to obey, and fearful to explain the difficulty. Washington lifted up his head—"What, not gone, sir!" he cried. Montagner then said,

"Why, General, I shall be taken, if I go through the Clove!"

Washington bent his eyes sternly upon him, and brought his foot down heavily upon the floor—

"Your duty, sir, is not to talk, but to obey."

We like this anecdote much—it has a touch of life and energy about it, that makes us see the true man, not the pasteboard man so often presented in the books. This incident has been the theme of more than one story illustrative of our national struggle.

As to the iron-works of the valley, they have been in operation since the first records of the place. Those at Augusta Falls, now fallen into decay, are recollected to have been in operation more than one hundred years ago, and how much earlier is not known. Here it is we should look for the strongest traces of the colony recorded by Helfenstein, but the progress of civilization, and the passage of the Erie Railroad, have nearly obliterated the footprints of the past. It will be seen by our frontispiece that the spot is lovely and to the last degree picturesque. One entire stone wall, with its low arch, is yet standing, covered with wild vines, together with many tottering vestiges, in the midst of which tall trees have sprung up, and now wave their luxuriant branches in melancholy beauty over the decay and the solitude of years.

It was here that we passed a day with a group at once tasteful and genial—a day to be calendared in white—clear, sun-shiny, and tranquil, with a sky of a bluey depth stretching away into the vastness of space, without the limitation of a dome. What wonder if whim and merriment mingled with the subtleties of sentiment and poetry, and that the echoes of the place rang with snatches of song and silvery peals of laughter! Even the sylvan deities of Greece would have smiled at our innocent joy, and the graver German spirits of Helfenstein would have found no lack of pious awe, and reverent and solemn thoughtfulness.

THE SALAMANDER.

CHAPTER FIRST.

SHOWING THAT A NEW LAND IS THE PLACE FOR A NEW MOULDING OF HUMANITY—OLD INHABITANTS OF ROCKLAND—POWER DERIVED FROM IRON—A TRUE WIFE.

The region of Rockland is high and mountainous, dotted here and there with fair lakes, scooped like bowls of crystal amid the hills, and these drop outwards in the shape of pleasant rivers, winding themselves in and out of valleys, and looking from between the hills to skies soft as those renowned in the stories of a worn-out world, and more radiant than those, for here the exhalations go up from lands covered with mountains and cataracts; from solemn and ancient woods, untouched for thousands of years. The tread of the mammoth and the mastodon is fresh upon the soil, and the tame ox*

> * The Buffalo. It is doubtful if this animal was ever so far east as the region of the Hudson. From further description, however, we are inclined to think that the author designed to include a much larger space than the valley of the Ramapo, in his account of Rockland. It is, probably, at times used figuratively for the whole country,—the term Rockland designating the hardiness and power of a new empire.

of declining lands is here vigorous and active as the wild colt of the desert. What wonder, then, that the skies of Rockland are gorgeous with storied clouds, bearing heavenward the tracery of nature's primal magnificence,—the imagery of stately pine and enduring oak forests, piled-up rocks, and great and uncouth animals, flaunting like blazoned banners,—the concave of the sky above painted with the power and the beauty of the earth below!

Here too is breadth and freedom,—room for great and solitary thought in this country of Rockland; and if a human heart found itself urgent with Godlike views of the good and true, here it might work itself, untrammeled, up to the achievement of a great mission. Underneath the overhanging trees of Rockland, too, the child-man moves, with bow and spear, living in the bosom of nature, and taking truth nearest from the teachings of the Almighty.

A fair river embraces the mountain rills of the valley of Rockland, which the primitive men called Ramapaugh,*

> * We find, by old records, that what is now called Ramapo was anciently spelt Ramapaugh, the name of a once powerful tribe of Indians, who inhabited this region. They were at one time of sufficient importance to compete with the Mohawks, a race in every way perhaps the most remarkable and the most heroic of any rude people which we have on record. Physically powerful and beautiful, they remind us of the heroes of Homer, and justify the untutored exclamation of West, when first presented to the Apollo Belvidere: "My God! how like a young Mohawk!"

and here he built himself lodges of bark, the centre crowned with a household altar, where he burned choice herbs in honor of the Unseen,*

> * Tobacco. The mind of Helfenstein, delighting in the classical, detects here the origin of some of those elegant customs of the ancients. The worship of the Lares and Penates was undoubtedly but the exaltation of the domestic feeling—the sense of the sacredness, the peacefulness, and happiness of the family relation, wrought into religious fervor. Hence the hearth-stone of early times assumed the shape of an altar to protecting divinities, with gradually increasing rites and ceremonies as the full man became developed in the processes of civilization. The Editor was once sitting by the ruins of an old ancestral dwelling, when a little child began to amuse himself by casting down the masonry of the hearth-stone. The pang she felt at the sight may appear childish to many minds, but to hers it seemed a desecration, a wanton disregard of the wasted and disconsolate powers who once made that spot the sacred altar of all that was purest and best in an honorable household. She could have wept, had not indignation at the irreverent young radical taken place of the softer feeling engendered by the genii loci.

and around which his children played and his wife dealt the cheer of her little family. Wayfarers seated themselves about the hearth-stone, and told tales of great men who did brave and generous deeds; and when the good wife urged her guest to eat, and the children looked cheerily into his eyes and told of their father's skill in the chase, and bade him eat, for their mother was the worthy wife of a great chief, the stranger partook of the venison, although he knew there was no more in the lodge, and the little ones laid themselves supperless upon their mats, and slept with strong and cheery hearts.

In the morning the guest was gone; but he had left a bundle of arrows behind, which never failed of their mark, and always returned to the quiver of the bowman. Then they knew it was Manabozho*

> * Manabozho seems to occupy the position of the deified heroes of antiquity,—less powerful than the Olympian gods, and not to be confounded with Chemanitou, or the Master of Life, in aboriginal mythology.

who had witnessed and rewarded their piety.

Iagou†

† Iagou, an Indian story-teller.

sometimes came to the Lodge,—an old withered man, with a very large mouth, and a voice so sweet that the Wekolis‡

‡ Wekolis, the Nightingale or Whippoorwill.

sat upon the roof to listen, and when she could not catch his tones she called the owl to hoot him away. But Iagou talked on, till the owl bent his round head to hear, and stared so out of his cat-like eyes that all the little birds chirped in merriment. Still Iagou told his tales, and at last Weeng§

§ Weeng, the Indian god of sleep; represented as a little man with a war club in his hand, with which he hits his victims on the head. The first blow causes them to yawn; the second, objects become indistinct, and the thoughts confused; the third renders them quite insensible.

hit the little ones with his war club, and the story-teller arose to leave; but he kissed one of the children first, who ever afterwards rivaled Iagou in the beauty of his legends and the sweetness of his voice.

The girls were sedate, and, though lovely, meek, for they feared the fate of the beautiful maiden who was punished for her coquetries by the appearance of Mowis, a most seductive youth, who won her love, and whom she madly followed over the whole earth, although he was but a man of shreds and ice, fragments of which were scattered in her path. They were a lively race who sported by the hill-sides, and loved the haunts of the Puck-wud-jees,*

* Puck-wud-jees, or little vanishers, or little wild men of the mountains. Literally they are the same as the fairies of England, and the "good people" of Ireland, and in some of their capers are analogous to the larger race of grotesque household sprites called Brownies. The Editor has before alluded to the singular coincidence of the Shaksperian word Puck and a generic Algonquin root. It is a curious fact, that all the northern nations of Europe, and the Germans also, believe in this class of diminutive spirits.

and when the corn was growing chased the little crooked "thief of the blade," Wagoman,†

† Wagoman, a little crooked old man, who stole into the corn-field and robbed the ears. In truth, the corn-blight. This impersonation of a natural vegetable disease has all the grace and liveliness of a Greek fancy. There is an exquisite version of a corn-festival song, as given by Schoolcraft,

Commencing,
"Wagoman, Wagoman, thief of the blade,
Blight of the corn-field, Pi-mo-said," &c.

For these and other illustrations of the text of Helfenstein the Editor is indebted to the researches of C. F. Hoffman, Esq., and Henry R. Schoolcraft, Esq.

from the field, with merry shouts.

Such were the primitive people of Rockland, and when one of their runners told them of a large number of people who were coming up the glen, with eyes of blue, and hair of gold, like those of the wife of Waupee,*

* It seems, by traditions of the aboriginals, that either they had seen the inhabitants of the north of Europe, which is not improbable, or the phenomenon of a fair complexion had sometimes appeared amongst them. It is more likely that at some early period a degree of intercourse existed. The Indians, to this day, have the greatest admiration for red hair.

the whole tribe went out to meet them. The leader of this colony was called Hugo, a large, handsome man, who gave them to understand that they wanted a place in which to worship the great Father, and to protect their wives and children. The child-man gave them corn and meat, and when Hugo and his people sank upon their knees and opened forth their hands, thanking and adoring the good Father, the people of the glen did so in like manner, and then led them to the village of Ramapaugh.

Here they began to build houses of stone, and the wondering inhabitants of Rockland looked on with delight; but when they saw the new people construct a great stone arch, into which they made an intense fire, and then laid earth thereon, out of which grew beautiful and deadly instruments, their wonder and delight changed to awe, and with one voice they declared that the Manitous had designed the region of Rockland for the descendants of Waupee, and they went forth to their ancient forests, leaving Hugo and his people in possession of the glen.*

* The iron of the Ramapo valley seems inexhaustible. Furnaces are in operation through the whole region, and thousands of men occupied in the mountains in mining for ore, yet the supply seems not in the least to diminish. To a stranger, nothing can be more wildly picturesque than the struggling flames in the midst of these hills and waterfalls, with the dense vegetation no ways impaired by the heat and smoke.

Here they and their descendants lived in great content, and here appeared the last of the Exiled Angels, who through a great love conceived a mission of good, but who

failed of its achievement, through the infirmities of the material into which they were compelled to shape themselves. How these passed from stage to stage, how they took uncouth shapes, and what torments were theirs, scourged and bound by the material, while the spirit still remembered vividly the glory and the blessedness of the past, cannot now be learned.

The story of the Lost Angel†

> † This conception of Helfenstein, that other spirits of benevolence had conceived the idea of sacrificing themselves for the redemption of men, but failed through the infirmities of a finite nature, we believe to be entirely original, and serves still further to enhance the simple beauty of the Savior's mission.
>
> There is something wildly touching, too, in this idea of an Archangel, of fallen benevolence, wandering in space, unidentified with the malevolent spirits of the Fall, yet exiled from the happiness of the untested Hierarchy.

who at length struggled upward to the Eternal, while others were annihilated for ever, is still remembered by the descendants of those who lived, more than two hundred years ago, in the valley of Rockland. These people still work, as did their ancestors, in iron, and have strange and beautiful tales of the mystery and the power of flame. They are a strong race, for they handle the vital element, and inhale its vigor; therefore is their step firm and buoyant, and their voices ring with the clanging clearness of the metal in which they work.

After the death of the first Master Hugo, the furnaces fell into the hands of his son, who was a good Master, but having traveled abroad and busied himself with many philosophies, had less of the pious gentleness of his father. He was a most skillful artisan, and learned in all the principles of his vocation, yet he loved it less than his ancestors had done before him, for they had labored in iron for more than a thousand years, and were right proud of their ancient and productive labor.

Now it was said the Master Hugo had pride enough to defy Satan himself, and the workmen admired his princely bearing and abundant hospitality, not a little fearing, too, his vigilant eye and exacting perfectness in workmanship. If they feared the master, they adored the wife of Hugo, who was so true a gentlewoman that the rudest artisan looked upon her as all loveliness and all nobleness, and treasured the words of her mouth as those rarest things, "Words fitly spoken."

Hugo was a strong-willed man, whom even the lady failed to influence, although he loved her exceedingly; and Dame Margery would say that a sad tone of her voice, or an appealing look of love, would bring tears to his eyes, and yet he would follow his own bent. The wife loved him too tenderly to repine at this. Ah, hers was a true woman heart, filled with meekness and reverence, and yet strong in its perception of all that is best and truest in life.

CHAPTER SECOND.

A GERMAN TRADITION, SHOWING THAT THERE ARE MANY THINGS NOT RESOLVABLE INTO SCIENCE—HUGO'S OBSTINACY—THE MEN TALK FREELY OF THEIR SUPERIORS—THE COMELY DAME MARGERY—A RARE BEAST.

It had been the custom to put out the flames of the furnace once in seven years, for a tradition existed that more than a thousand years ago, amid the Hartz mountains, a terrible creature*

> * We find this tradition of the Salamander current amongst the workmen of furnaces, and always from some cause or other the forges are put out at intervals. We are told the superstition bas been made the subject of more than one story, none of which have ever come under our own observation.

had arisen in the flames, which, possessed of a wild and mischievous spirit, pursued the workmen till he clasped them in his arms, entirely consuming the parts which he touched; walking through them, as it were, leaving upon each side the scattered fragments of their bodies. A creature of such malice and so terrible was at length transfixed by a thunderbolt, and now may be seen upon one of the mountains, writhing in flames whenever a thunder storm passes over the country.

Since which time the men were unwilling to labor unless the fire was extinguished the seventh year, for they feared some evil might come of it. But Hugo would not listen to the appeals of his people, and now as the night wore on they moved sullenly to and fro, doing his bidding, but with unwilling minds, for the seventh year had arrived, and yet the master bade them feed the furnace. So, as we have said, the men did unwilling service, and talked freely of the pride and perversity of Hugo.

"Now, by my faith, Ralph, I think our master is right, not to heed the crooning of such weak heads. Aye, but a bold man he is, and I like the way he defies even bad spirits. Hugo is half Salamander himself."

"I like not the use of that word at this time," retorted Ralph, "and you may feed the furnace· as you like, but not another coal will I add to its heat."

His companion arose from the corner where he had been stretched amongst the cinders, and added a quantity of fuel to the intensely glowing furnace. Ralph joined him, and the red heat glared upon their wild, half-naked figures, and shot up to the rude rafters, revealing forge, and hammer, and pincer, and all the many implements of the artisan. They stooped down and peered intently into the white heat of the furnace.

"To say truth, Ralph, I do not like that black spot that has been for many days gathering in the heart of the flame. It spreads, too; it is a long, slender thread now."

"A man needn't make the devil his foe, Peter. I tell you it is more than a hundred years since this furnace was set up, and every seven years the master has put out the fire. It is Satan's own element, Peter, and if kept too long burning generates one of his own imps. Five times have I seen the great furnace black as an housewife's hearth after a long stormy night; it was quenched, and holy water poured upon the stones, and the men saw it go out reverently, and blessed God that its wailings and clankings were hushed. Weeks did it take us to bring up the heat again, but God be praised that the fierce fire is stilled from torment the seventh year."

Ralph was squatted upon the clay floor, with his elbows upon his knees, and Peter, lying flat upon his stomach, kept his eyes fixed upon the furnace.

"I like not that black streak, Ralph. God defend us! Assuredly there are two eyes, glaring hotter than the hottest coal."

"Something terrible will come of it, Peter. I have heard smiths tell strange tales about monsters that appear from an over-heated furnace. But I am weak of head, as you say, Peter, and Hugo our master is full of book learning, and despises the wisdom of poor unlearned bodies like us. But what a man's fathers have seen and told to their children, to my mind is next to the book of truth in which is hid the secret of our salvation."

"True, Ralph; and Hugo is not as pious as his father was. I distrust this book learning. God forgive me, but I prayed twice as often in the days of our old master."

Ralph shook his head solemnly. "An you did not, Peter, scanty prayers have you put up. The last one that went heavenward might hunt a sad time to find its brother, sent so long before."

"Beshrew thee, Ralph, for a canting hypocrite that thou art. Were it not for Dame Margery, thy wife, I doubt me if thou wouldst pray oftener than I do; but, man, ye must kneel when the apron string goes down."

Ralph jerked his frock uneasily, and kept his eyes fixed upon the furnace. But soon his honest face cleared itself. "It is no shame to a man to be led by such a woman as Margery. 'Deed, Peter, she can pray like the priest himself, and her clear face makes every thing clear about her."

By this time the two men were joined by many about the neighborhood, who had heard of the seven years' heated furnace which was not to be put out, and they came to look upon the living heat. Ralph and Peter drew back as one after another came nearer to look in, and then each one shut his eyes and covered his face quickly, nearly blinded by the light, and each uttered a short scream, whereat the men laughed gayly, for their eyes did not shrink from the flame.

While these people were going and coming, Peter ever and anon teazed the flame with new fuel, but Ralph would do nothing of the sort. Neither had looked within for some time, so greatly were they amused at the behavior of the strangers. At last. Ralph put them aside, and stooped down as before, and with unwinking eye met the fierce flame. He drew back, and a white paleness, which was terrible in that dark-burned, strong man, came over his face. He seized the arm of Peter, and jammed him down where he could see the hottest flame.

There, in the midst, the two men saw a living form, moving to and fro. Long and slender was it, and red, whitely red, clear, as it were, lucid redness, and moving as it exulted in its own element. Terribly beautiful was the creature, and the two men could not remove their eyes therefrom, but drew nearer and nearer, till it would seem as if they must be shriveled by the furnace.

"The Lord God deliver ye from evil!" they heard Dame Margery say, and she sprinkled water upon their faces. Both drew back, and knelt down and blessed God.

Then Margery bent her comely head, and looked in likewise. She turned to Ralph, and said,

"Go to that proud man, Hugo, and bring him hither."

Ralph went out, and the dame drew back into the shade of the great cavernous stone furnace, and folded her hands across her breast, and prayed in a clear voice. Peter bent his head and listened reverently, and to his eyes Margery became one of the sainted figures which pray for ever in their cold, patient marble.

Directly Ralph came in, and Hugo smiled as he greeted familiarly the tire-woman of his wife, and asked what she did in such a place, at such a time.

"My lady dreamed that a bad spirit had obtained a shape upon God's blessed earth, through the willful pride of her husband, and she awoke, crying, ' Woe, woe, woe!' and bade me come hither. I pray thee look yonder, and behold."

Hugo laughed lightly, and said, "My lady is wont to have pleasanter dreams; methinks they do her husband small praise to-night;" and he took the hand of Margery, and would have led her forth, but her lips grew white, and she pointed to the furnace.

Hugo and all the men looked that way; and from the mouth thereof half stepped forth what might have seemed a slender flame, but for the intense eyes that cast themselves upon every side. It drew in again, and as it turned itself about, a long, limber tail lay upon the hearth, and then was lost in the flame.

"Beshrew me," cried Hugo, "but it is a brave beast, and I warrant me will give a new temper to the steel that shall glow beside him. Methinks the brand of Hugo will be one likely to be remembered."

CHAPTER THIRD.

THE MYSTERY OF WATER—LOVE STRONGER THAN DEATH—MEN MIGHT BE ALWAYS YOUNG BUT FOR THE FRETTINGS OF TOIL, AND THE DESIRE OF GAIN—THE SABBATH, WHICH IS REST.

At this moment a strong wind shook the trees near by, and the sound of wailing filled the air. Margery hastened out, but Hugo kept his eyes fixed upon the beast that played about the great arch, and sometimes stepped outward, with his forefeet upon the hearth.

Soon they heard a clear, mild voice utter, "Thou shalt be blessed by the water and the Spirit," and the wife of Hugo entered, bearing a crystal pitcher filled with water. It was most sad to behold her, for she had been very ill, unable to lift up her fair head, and now the light shone upon a face palely beautiful.

She did not speak to anyone, but dipped her small hand into the pitcher, and. sprinkled water upon the flame. This she did seven times, and then the crystal pitcher fell from her hands, and was dashed to pieces.

Hugo groaned heavily, and lifted her in his arms and bore her to her chamber, followed by Dame Margery, weeping and wringing her hands.

No sooner had the lady sprinkled water upon the flame, saying words each time that no one else could understand, than the rage of the roaring flame began to abate, and the white heat thereof fell to a glowing redness, and this began to show dim spots; a blackness at length gathered in the arch, and the furnace was dead before the gentle shower which had been blessing the earth was passed over.

In the meanwhile Hugo kissed the hands of his wife, knelt down beside her, and laid her cheek upon his broad breast, with her light fair hair tangled amid his beard. She breathed faintly, but did not unclose her sealed lids, with their blue tracery and line of golden fringe marking her pale cheek.

"Speak to me, dearest love, dovey, one word, my gentle one,"he would say, and then in weak fondness he held up her little hand, and laid it, like a flake of snow, upon his large, dark palm. He kissed her lips, but the sweet buds parted, and his own lips met the little pearls within, but no answering pressure. He laid her white arms over his shoulder, but they clasped not.

At length the leech led him from the room, and Dame Margery wept over her. A sudden glare from the furnace off in the side of the hill caused Margery to leave the side of her mistress, and press her face to the lattice, where she could see Ralph and Peter, and men and women, standing in front of the lurid light, while the rain came down upon them lightly, like a benison.

When the leech came back, Margery sat with two infants upon her lap, and the lady was quite dead. Margery, too, was pale and bewildered, and could remember nothing clearly, but spoke of strange voices and a great light.

The sun came up rudely the next morning, warm and cloudless, exulting in light, and hurrying away the soft drops that trembled upon the trees and quivered amongst the vine leaves. He chased the bird from his nest with exuberant song, and peered into the bud till its bosom opened in fragrance. Dame Margery drew the curtains, so that he saw not the white lady upon her bed, with blossoms upon her temples and breast, and lying close beside the hands that stirred not; nor should he see the stout, bold Hugo, crushed at her feet, with one small shoe, the last she had worn, under his cheek, and he without a tear. No, no; Dame Margery shut out the sun from such a sight, and poured water over the temples of the strong man, now like an infant; but he motioned her away, and ground his teeth sharply, to keep down the groans that struggled to his lips.

It was a Sabbath in the glen when the old furnace was allowed to rest. The air, no longer teazed by the ascending sparks, grew clear and cheery, and at night God's holy stars looked benignly down, and all things told of peace and rest. Men's faces grew young and tranquil, and little children ceased to breathe heavily, pressed by the heat and dust of man's labor. The young men walked about in holiday suit; maidens braided their long hair, and donned their smartest apron and bodice, sure of an admirer who might not be free for love's fooleries seven years, at least, to come.

Aged men and women walked out, with crutch in hand, to look upon the black and sooty crannies, and the cavernous, yawning arch, hushed from its bellowings. They bethought themselves of the past, and where they might be when the furnace should be next time stilled, and they opened their toothless jaws with an audible groan, then shut them closely, so that the lips were sucked in and the chin quivering. Oh, but the aged must live in the freshness of God's own truth, or theirs is a weary waiting for the good Master.

How the bat skirred about the cavern at night-fall, and the swallow dipped out and in, doubtful if he might not build his mortared nest in the rocks! The bee and the hornet buzzed at the mouth, for the air was yet warm, and the fly played its triangles in the sunshine. The mosses grew green in fissures of the rocks, the spears of grass struggled up through the cinders; the little blossom nestled beside the stone, and the dew stayed where it had been chased away for years. Oh, but it was a fair sight to see how readily nature took up her sweet Sabbath the moment men ceased their fretfulness of toil, and how she looked pleadingly into their eyes, and stole with a blessing into their hearts.

The corn came up, the fruit dropped from the tree; maidens twirled the distaff, and men trimmed the vine, and brought the free gifts from the earth; and there, in the midst, the sword in its terrible beauty looked unseemly, and the nerves winced at the sight thereof; the barb for the steed became unsightly, for all things breathed of holiness and peace.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

THE BAPTISM—THE SACRED MYSTERY OF THREE—YOUNG HUGO DENIED THE SEAL OF REDEMPTION—PIETY OF DAME MARGERY—A WIFE IN ALL DUTY.

Dame Margery, as was her right, urged the maidens to their duty, and when twice seven days were passed bade Ralph and Peter kindle the furnace. She became nurse and foster-mother to the babes, and as such she donned a muslin cap with a high crown, and wore a muslin apron nearly as fine as that of a gentlewoman. She talked less than formerly with the simple people about her, for she directed the household of Hugo, the great man of the glen. Indeed, Ralph thought she stepped prouder than her wont, but she was gentle as ever in her steady attachment to her husband, whom she honored in all duty.

The long table was spread in the great hall, with the large chair of Hugo, and the lady's chair empty beside him; and the dame sat where she sat in the lifetime of her mistress, with Ralph at her side, and Peter and his dame Alice, and all the men, each in his place below.*

> * This ordering of the household of Hugo is much after the old baronial style occasionally to be met with in the older families of the country, where the relation of master and dependent is strongly marked, but not unpleasantly so, as is the case where the condition of slavery and difference of color exist. We remember hearing a revered ancestor remonstrate with a younger branch of his family, which had adopted the innovation of a separate table, by saying, "I do not see how you reconcile it to a good conscience, when you remove your dependents from the improvement to be derived from listening to elevating conversation, and the advantages and restraints of elegant usages. They lose their best opportunity to learn the true dignity of their nature."

Hugo poured water into his goblet, and filled that of the lady. He closed his eyes, and clicked the glasses, but he put no meat upon her plate. The people looked at each other as he did this daily, but Dame Margery turned her face away, and they were reproved. Nor did she tell how Hugo kept the small thimble, and the basket of the lady, just as she had left them; how in her chamber her dress still hung upon the peg, the stuffed chair stood by the table, with the cushion for her feet, and how he every day sat down beside it, and leaned his head over, with his elbow upon the arm of his wife's chair, and looked at the place she had so often filled, and talked as in the days that were past; how he brought flowers and laid them by the vase, which Margery kept fresh with water, and every day a rose was laid upon her pillow. Margery kept all things as in the day when her mistress was present, and thus the sense of vacancy was less oppressive, and she seemed rather to have stepped forth to visit elsewhere, leaving the angel of her influence to hallow the place she had filled.

Dame Margery and Alice now began to talk of the christening. They spoke of the time when the priest should come and place upon the brows of the children the seal which is the earthly sign of the heavenly bond. As they talked of the broidered robes and caps, and the cake and rejoicing, the two women plied their needles, and by turns touched a foot to the wicker cradle in which the infants slept.

"Truly," cried Dame Alice, "little Hugo is a goodly child; stout and ruddy. What beautiful golden locks, and bright eyes! One would take him to be a full month older than Mary."

"That they would," returned Margery, "and yet it is most strange that our master does not even look at the children. It would seem as if he owed them a spite for the death of our lady. Aye, Dame Alice, we must learn to take all things as if from God's own hand, whether good or evil. We must not see the human shape through which they come."

It was a bright sunshiny day, the day of the christening, and the bell of the little church filled the whole valley with its promptings. Dame Margery came forth with young Hugo in her arms, as being more honorable, for he was the heir, and Dame Alice with little Mary. The two women walked side by side, their muslin and ribbons bravely mounted, and holding the babes so as best to show their long fine dresses and great beauty. Hugo, with his hands clasped behind him, walked before them, in his sable coat, and far and near came the people of. the glen, to see the christening.

"The master has stepped his left foot first over the threshold,"*

> * This superstition is very current, and has given rise to the proverb, "He stepped the best foot first there," meaning, a person was lucky. Dr. Johnson, it will be recollected, if by accident he stepped the left foot first over a threshold, would return and correct it.

said Margery. "I pray thee, Dame Alice, be upon thy guard;" and she stepped her right foot upon the sill just as the priest came forward to meet them with holy water.

At this moment there was a bright flash of light, and little Hugo gave a great cry, and folded his small hands over his eyes.

"The Salamander!" screamed Margery, and dropped the child upon the ground.

Hugo stamped with his feet, and bade them be silent, for indeed nothing was to be seen of the child; and there stood the dame, with her arms spread out, one foot upon the sill, and her eyes looking as if they could see into the earth itself.

"The Lord deliver us from evil!" said the priest, and all the people cried, Amen! and then he sprinkled water upon the brow of little Mary, and blest her, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Source, Life, and Spirit.*

> * To the pious mind there is a peculiar appositeness and beauty in the terms of the Trinity.

When the words were pronounced, there was a wailing as of a child, filling the whole church, and Margery fell down, sobbing bitterly, for it was the voice of little Hugo.

"The Lord bless and deliver thee, poor thing," she cried, "whatever thou art. The Lord bring thee to the true baptism. Thou has slept in my bosom, I have carried thee in my arms, and washed thy pretty limbs with blessed water. God redeem thee from the power of evil." Thus she went homeward, wringing her hands, and wailing for the lost child.

"I pray thee, silence, good Margery," said Ralph, "for the master is fierce in his wrath, and he looks at thee with a terrible frown."

"I will not be silent, Ralph. It is the proud man Hugo who caused this strange thing in the valley, and now he should fast and pray, if so be the evil, whatever it is, may be washed from the dear universe. Ralph, I am no woman if I do not every day make the master feel that he has sinned."

"As thou likest, Margery," said Ralph. "I am sure thou art able to make him uncomfortable enough, if such is thy will."

Margery started, and looked into the face of her husband, and seeing how sternly he turned his eyes away, the tears came to her own, and she laid her hand in his.

Ralph held it gently, for he knew the goodness of Margery, and the love in her great heart, which always found exactly the right view of every thing.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

HUGO HAD BEEN A FAIR, ROSY CHILD—CHILDLESS MARRIAGE—MARGERY'S PRAYER—THE FURNACE.

After the christening, when Dame Margery laid little Mary into the cradle, she knelt down beside it, and wept and prayed a long time for the loss of young Hugo. She had always misdoubted that all was not right in regard to the child; and yet he was so fair, with such wondrous eyes, and such an unbaby, yet lovely smile, that her heart yearned more tenderly toward him than it ever did towards his sister. This was in part because he was a male child, which women are more apt to admire than a female, but mostly because she felt sure there was something mysterious in his birth.

Her heart misgave her that some evil might be connected with him, but this, so far from causing her to dislike the child, evoked a tenfold tenderness. She bathed him often in pure water, for she saw his flesh was warmer and more rosy than Mary's, and the little creature so loved the blessed element that it gave her joy to put him therein. Then when she took him from the bath, his bright curly locks and clear eyes were so exceedingly beautiful, that she covered his pretty limbs with kisses, and laying him ·across her bosom rocked to and fro, smiling with happiness even as if it had been her own child, for Margery had never been a mother. Ralph had seen her do this daily, and a discontent and envy grew upon the man, and he said, "Indeed, Margery, were the bantling mine, and its blood a part of thine own, thou couldst not love it better."

"I know not how that is, Ralph; I only know the child fills me with a great joy. Shame on thee, Ralph, if thy selfish heart is shut up because the child is not ours. Is it not God's gift, into whosesoever lap it may fall? See, is it not a new spirit cased in this pretty shape, to learn earth-ways, and to do human-service? How its dear eyes look out in wonder, and yet how like a little bird's they look, in mute mystery! Ah, Ralph, a creature like this must cause great gladness to hearts wedded like ours," and she laid the child in his arms, and leaned her head upon his shoulder.

His heart was touched, and he in turn spake words of patience to comfort Margery, and then they caressed the child together.

All these things the good woman remembered now, and her tears flowed afresh. She bethought of a new prayer in behalf of little Hugo, and cried, "Oh God, redeem the child by the water and the Spirit, and by the blood of the good child Jesus. Whatever may hold him in thrall, redeem him therefrom, good Lord. If he dwell in the air, be hid in the sea, or be buried in the bowels of the earth, by the blessed human form which thou didst once thyself wear, redeem him, good Lord."

When she had uttered this prayer she grew more calm, and resolved daily to pour such for the child. Then she took up his dainty robes, and little caps, and held them before her eyes, tearfully. The silver porringer was there, and the spoon, and a small sock, just as his foot had filled it, plump and open, and the ribbon crumpled and half faded. Poor Margery's heart was like to break at sight of these, for she had never loved Mary as she had done the little Hugo.

While she thus wept, to her great surprise the master came into the room and looked at the child sleeping in its cradle. Margery arose and took Mary therefrom, and laid her in his arms. "Thou art a good woman, Margery," he said, and carried the child to his own room.

All night she slept in his arms, her silken hair touching his lips. It was a strange sight, to see the dark stout man folding so gently the little child, and lifting it now and then to the light, for its breath was so still he feared it must have died, and he sleeping. When Margery came to take it away at early dawn, she found tears upon its brow.

The furnace had again been kindled, and the glen resounded as usual with the clanking of the bellows and the ringing of the anvil. Far up the sides of the hill the crimson sparks chased one another, faster and faster, as the flames stirred beneath. All night, amid the still pale stars arose the red stars from below. In the blackness of the night, making all things blacker, danced here and there the lurid dots, now up, up into the blackness, and now lost. How black seemed the steep crags; and the pines above stood erect, as if to escape the heated bullets which shot up into their midst. As people passed to and fro in front of the flame, they wore the appearance of grotesque, burning creatures, out with mystery in their movements. Little children lost the harmony of proportion, and seemed all legs and head, impish things, frisking about in the darkness. As the night wore on, and all became hushed, the river and the furnace contended for the mastery of sound; the flames bellowing and roaring with heat and labor, and the water dashing spray, and singing, over its bed of moss and stone, a song of God's love and goodness. The one calling for toil and hatred, and war and death; the other for blossoms and love and peace and life: and so through the night the two elements, which rested not, told each its tale of power.

Often, when the people of the glen were sleeping, Hugo stood at the door of his house, and listened to the river, as if it washed care and toil from his soul; and without knowing what he did, his eyes followed the shower of sparks which crowded and danced and died in the black night. Uneasy thoughts stirred within him, for the soul is apt to be at odds with the work of the body, and at such times he half misdoubted whether the toil of life and the weapons of the warrior were not evil in the sight of the good Lord. He questioned whether the time would not come when the sword should cease to be of use in the world; whether all these bright, terrible instruments, which fill us with such wild delight, because of their strange beauty and power, albeit the nerves

shudder to clasp them, would not survive their use, and lie rusty and dim by the wayside.

It is well to stand, with a strong heart, under the silence of night, for it is then that a great awe stealeth upon us, and phantoms of dread sometimes haunt the chambers of the mind, which incline the heart to prayer, and that bringeth peace and quietness. It is then, too, that we feel the delights of goodness, and the soul riseth into its own atmosphere.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

THE SEVENS—CONSIDERATENESS OF MARGERY—MARY'S BOWER—THE SACREDNESS OF SLEEP.

Seven years passed away as years will pass, we hardly know how. Each one has its weight of care and toil and grief, heavy to be borne, which makes the lapse long and wearying. Each one has its interval of joy and peace, and sometimes of content, refreshing and timely: yet when the years are gone we wonder at their fleetness; we look back, and sigh that they are past, and remember that we must begin to set our house in order, and wait the coming of the good Master; or if a great burden of grief hath fallen upon us, a burden proportioned to our capacity to suffer and our capacity to bear, we sigh deeply, and thank God they are over and we nearing the bourne where the weary are at rest.

Seven years, and Dame Alice counted three white-haired children, when at night she looked about, mindful of all that needed her care. Seven years; and her eldest boy began to lord it over the little Alice, as boys will over girls; and he began to feel proud, too, that he dared sometimes defy the good dame, his mother, even as he would blush to do when, in years to come, he should have learned the wisdom and the beauty of obedience. Seven years!—and he had done battle with a boy twice his size, but with only half his spirit. Seven years! and Blanche, the chief workman's daughter, already began to step mincingly, and twist her head over to one side, the better to show the whiteness of her dimpled shoulders. Seven years! and Bernerd by the well was learning to dread a falsehood more than a blow from his vixenish mother, whose hand was over-ready with a cuff, and poor Bernerd's ear and shoulder always ripe for a dodge. Seven years! and some few white locks were no more seen in the low church, but the churchyard showed the white stones that covered them, and the green grass waved in the sunshine just as the white locks had done before. Seven years! and many more were the small feet that moved crispily lest the stout shoe should give out unseemly Sabbath day warning.

Seven years! and the green moss had grown more thickly about the stone trough, where Bernerd and his mother stood ready to draw water from the well for the thirsty traveler or the neglected kine, and the great willow above and the elm by its side had each dipped their roots into the waters below, till every branch and twig was an airy rill drooping downward and disporting in the eyes of their sister rills below. The cabin of the dame looked nothing more than a brown shed beneath them, till you entered, and saw the bright platters upon the shelves, and the wicker chairs, and the white floor and the woodbine rustling against the window; then you felt that somewhere in the heart of the good woman was a place for order and beauty, which would grow into a garden of love when the fretful hedgings of this life should be removed.

Seven years! and Hugo began to show threads of silver amid the blackness of his beard and hair, which made one see how very black and beautiful they had been, and yet you would not wish the white hair away, it was so bright in itself, and suited so well the mature manliness of his mien. Margery, too, was a trifle paler than before, but more comely withal, for she was fuller and more fair, about the throat and stately neck. Gentle changes and gentle developments had marked the lapse of seven years in the glen, leaving its aspect nearly the same it had worn at the death of the lady.

How had it fared at this time with the child Mary? When the holy water of baptism fell upon her brow, she closed her eyes with a sudden start, and then lay motionless. From that hour she had never wakened. Many times in a day Margery fed her with milk as she would a little babe, which she took with unclosed lids and then turned her cheek softly upon her pillow. Not unfrequently she changed her side, and the rosy lines were visible upon her cheek and shoulders, where the muslin folds had pressed—bright beautiful spots showing the softness of the fine skin. She often placed one hand beneath her cheek, sleeping thus with her pretty red lips parted.

Her sleep was certainly not without visions of some kind, for she often smiled; the color came and went upon her face, and the pulsations of her blood varied in concert. Sweet murmurings stole from her lips like half uttered music, and these changes suggested ever the hope that her lids would unclose. Yet time stole on and she lay the same, wrapt in soft slumber, fair and growing, and ever seemingly ready to awake.

Till Mary was two years old, Dame Margery had kept her as much as possible concealed, deeming it a reproach, that the child of Hugo should lie as one devoid of mind. She thought, "Surely, if the child is to be an Innocent, if such great evil is to come upon the Master, it is not well that it should be the talk of the people of the glen." So she kept her in an inner chamber, and those who saw her lying in her rosy sleeping, rarely knew that she was ever thus. Every night her little form lay beside Hugo, and more than once the dame had heard the groans of the strong man as he bent over his child, called her fondly by name, and strove to rouse her. But the still night wore on, the day came and went, and she was still the same.

At length Hugo ordered a most lovely bower to be built for the child, in which was a raised couch covered with silk and muslin, whereon she was placed. Here the light came softened through curtains of rose-color; vines clustered about the lattices, roses, lilacs and all fair flowers strewed her pillow and stood in marble vases about the room. So quiet was the bower that birds flew in and out, and the bee and humming-bird sucked the honey from the blossoms of her pillow.

It was a fair sight to see the child as she thus lay in her muslin robes, tall and growing as a girl of seven years, with her pure face upon which the sun had never looked, and no human emotion had ever been traced. Her long pale hair reached nearly to her feet, soft wavy and unbound, parted from her fair open brow and descending like a veil.

In this bower Dame Margery staid always to watch the girl, to brush her long hair, and be ready when she should awake. In the quietude of this room she grew placid and youthful, singing sweet holy psalms and praying hourly for Mary and the little lost Hugo. Here at certain hours of the day she allowed strangers to come in and look upon the sleeper; one at a time, treading upon tiptoe and speaking in under tones. Little children came in this way looking down at their raised feet, and their shoulders hunched up, till they stood hushed beside the couch.

Sometimes visitors had thought to kiss the beautiful child, but Margery put them sternly aside, saying, "She is a waif from heaven," and thus none were allowed to touch the child; but she caused each one to kneel down and pray that all might be well for the sweet sleeper.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

THE SABBATH OF THE VALLEY AGAIN—GEMS OF INFINITELY LESS VALUE THAN A BLOSSOM—A FACE WITHOUT HUMAN EMOTION—EYES THAT HAD NEVER WEPT—THE BIRTH OF A FAIR STREAM.

The workmen were cleaning the soot from themselves and their garments, for Hugo had ordered the hammer to be laid aside, the huge bellows to fold its wrinkled ribs, and the hot furnace to be left till it should burn itself out for lack of fuel. Again was the glen ringing its seventh year jubilee, leaving the river with no rival voice; so it sang onward the songs of the hill and the rocks, where the strong winds gather themselves, and the cold frost hides, and the meek blue-bell and columbine and moss-cup cling. It sang the song that enters into strong hearts, causing a great love for freedom and for man.

Margery had turned her back to the couch that she might catch the last rays of light, for the sun was down, and she had a few stitches to put in a new gown for her friend, Dame Alice, when she was aware of low voices in the room. A fair boy stood by the side of Mary, who had raised herself up with both arms about his neck.

The boy placed a beautiful Crown upon the brow of Mary, saying,

"They are only gems, only gems, dear Mary, I had hoped they would be flowers." As he uttered this he wept bitterly, wringing his small hands and repeating, "only gems; I had hoped they would be flowers,"*

> * It is intimated hereafter that the higher Angels of God are of the substance of flame, which is love. Hence, if they part with the pureness of this spirit of love, they descend in the scale and lose the water of the holy spirit, and become of that burning, metallic, material character, which is capable of producing gems and metals only.

and he disappeared from her side.

Mary turned her head to look after the boy, and then put her pink fingers under her cheek to sleep again, never seeming to think of the gems upon her head.

At this moment, Dame Alice came in for the new gown, and found Dame Margery in tears, for she believed the boy to be the dear lost Hugo, and she sent for the Master to come straightway and see if Mary might not be raised from her slumber. He came, and lifted her from the couch, calling her by name.

The child opened her eyes with smiles, and looked around the bower with a pleased countenance, like one who is no way surprised. She put the ends of her rosy fingers together and listened as expecting some voice. When she had kept this posture for some moments, she shook her head to throw back the curls, and held it up, looking all about her. As she met the eyes of Hugo and Margery she smiled, but seemed expecting something more. Then she closed her pretty lids, and laid her head upon her father's shoulder tenderly, as if to sleep; but her face seemed troubled, and she again lifted her head from its bed of curls. Suddenly a pang contracted her brow, and she burst into tears. They were the first she had ever shed, and she looked terrified and surprised as the tiny globes of water shone upon the fingers she had raised to her eyes. Leaning over, she pointed to the couch, and Hugo placed her thereon; but the child wept and looked about by turns, murmured pretty words, and stretched out her arms, but did not sleep as was her wont.

That night there was a storm, which filled the inhabitants of the valley with great fear. The rain pelted downward, round and heavy, swelling the river beyond its banks, and the lightning flashed the way for the lagging thunder, till the whole glen was alive with flame and tumult. There was a tuft of pines upon the peak rising above the house of Hugo, which a thunderbolt having embraced left it blazing like a huge torch, flickering and flashing in the black air. The mark of the bolt was traced by many down to the foot of the mountain, and for awhile it was feared that death might have marked its way, but the next flash revealed the heavy stone walls unharmed and the light of Margery burning as ever in the bower of Mary. All night the wind and the rain careered in the valley. A thousand streams and torrents poured from the sides of the mountains. The booming of the thunder; the rocks hurled from above; the trees torn from the hill sides, and the roar of the waters, were terrible to hear.

Mary clung to the neck of Margery in silence, only she laid her beating heart close to her side, and that told the terror within. More than once the dame heard the sobbings of little Hugo close to her ear, repeating "only gems; oh for the water and the spirit!" More than once, too, little Mary murmured caressingly, and Margery saw the flashing of eyes, like two stars, and felt a breath warm and sweet as the babe Hugo's had been.

When the morning dawned, all the people were out in front of their houses to note the effects of the storm. The river was beginning to curb its swollen waters, and the mountain torrents, which had leaped and flashed like mad spirits through the night, now shrunk themselves inward, hiding behind the wet stones, and gurgling with the dying mirth of the last night's revel. Men were out, tying up the broken limbs of the fruit trees, and women and girls drawing the tangles from the vines, and pressing the earth about the roots of shrubs, from which the rain had washed it. Workmen drew the disrupted trees from the road-way, and groups of boys cast the stones washed from the hills out of the path, and gathered with noisy fun about the big bowlders,*

> * The geological structure of the valley of Ramapo is most interesting. The rocks are of granite, worn smooth in many instances by the action of water, and whole portions of others marked as if by the passage of heavy bodies

dragged over them. Immense bowlders stand in bold and grotesque relief, suggesting the presence of some powerful agent at some time ns having produced these effects.

which lay, uncouth upstarts, right in the way of the passer-by.

Changes were visible upon every side, but the most wondrous had been produced by the lightning upon Nun-da-wá-o,†

† Nun-da-wá-o. An Iroquois term, meaning a high peak.

which rose above the house of Hugo. A beautiful rill was now seen to start far up from the side of the mountain, a silver chain dropping downward, till as you drew nearer a robe of spray shivered over a height of twenty feet, and was lost in a basin of crystal. Following the stream upward, it was found to flow over a bed formed of the most beautiful crystals, pink and amethyst and amber tinted, whose angles flashed under the clear waters, and glittered in the sunshine. Now it danced over these shapely and translucent stones, and now it floated in a mimic dell in which a nymph might disport herself, for, as it glided outward again, the waters rolled themselves upward like a sweet moist lip, and there they seemed to linger; though ever sliding onward, resting and pausing at the brim, and ever away. Thus the rill came down steep by steep, till it forgot itself in the river. Dipping the finger into this pure water, it was found to be of a blood heat.

To the joy of every one, this brook did not run itself out as the other mountain torrents did, but continued dropping downward, the merriest little brook that ever danced from hill side. The people all named it Ne-be-na,*

* This seems to be an Indian term, meaning literally pure or good water.

which means the gift of God; and soon its waters were used far and near for baptism, and people came from a great distance to carry vessels of it for the sick, who believed their pains were eased thereby.

Hugo planted a garden through which it was allowed to run before it reached the river, and upon its marge he placed blossoms, vines at the foot of the hill, and hardier shrubs and flowers quite to the source of the stream. As one stood in the garden and looked upward, it seemed like a grotto made of precious stones, around which blossoms clustered, and a silver-footed nymph shrank inward from the rude light, but ever as she strove to hide herself, a glimpse of her veil or a slide of her footfall stole outward.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

THE SLIGHTEST VESTIGE OF THOSE WE LOVE DEAR TO THE HEART—LOVE HAS MANY LABORS—THE TOAD, CLINGING NEAREST TO THE EARTH, IS AN EXPONENT OF ITS POWERS.

"I pray thee, Mary, put thy hands down from thy eyes, and come here; let me teach thee to sew, child, or thou wilt be but an idle minion."

In this way Dame Margery reproved Mary, who went about as if seeking somewhat, with the palm of her hand making a roseate arch above her eyes. The child obeyed, and kneeling upon a footstool peered over at the labor of the dame, her dark hazy eyes growing into wonder as she looked. Taking the veil into her hands, she looked curiously at the small stitches, even, side by side like long rows of tiny teeth, and holding it upward she cried,

"Are all our garments made in this way?"

"All," said the dame, "just so many stitches. Thy lady mother made this pretty robe with her own dear hands."

The white child lifted the garment upward, and kissed the little points which showed where her mother's fingers had touched. "Did my mother sit all day boring little holes into cloth in this way?" asked she sorrowfully.

"Often; and she made garments for the poor, which she carried with her own hands, giving them bread and wine, and her own sweet smile."

"Did she give Bertrand of the Well?" asked Mary. "Often and often, for Bertrand was but an idle boy, and she would say, we must do good to those who can do no good themselves, blessing God, who has taught us to think and to do."

"Aye, this little dagger of thine, Dame Margery, is but a teazing thing; must I learn to call it a needle, and use it, and sit mewed up all the bright days? Nay, nay, good Margery;" and she ran out laughing, with her long hair floating and undulating behind her.

"Alack, alack; she is but an Innocent after all," said the dame looking after her. "And yet how strong and fair she is! how firmly she treads the hillside, and how her round limbs swell with life. Surely she is a goodly child, had she but sense; but she will never sit with needle in hand, directing household thrift as did her gentle mother, God rest her soul, for she had ever some new good in her heart, and a fair song upon her lips."

Margery followed the steps of the child up the glen, threading the peak up to the very source of the stream called Nebená, and there she cast herself into the crystal basin, holding up her threads of hair above the water, so that Margery should know where

she was. Margery saw the gleams of spray dashed outward, and knew that Mary was pretending to dash water into her face, and she looked till in her fondness she thought she could see even at this distance the saucy laugh of the child, the red, parted lips, and the little white teeth.

When she came down, Bernerd had brought in a wreath of flowers, which Mary caressed lovingly. When the dame would have put a needle into her fingers, she pulled off a thorn and merrily pricked the good woman; she stuck flowers into her stately cap, punched her little finger into her side, and laughed because in this way she tickled the dame. But at length Margery grew angry, and spoke sharply to the child, who looked up tearfully, and took the needle between her fingers. She tucked the hair from one side behind her ear, and then looked intently at the point which she was to sew; but her brow contracted and her lips opened and shut every time she drew the thread back and forth.

When Hugo entered, she sprang into his arms, weeping, "Must we all do just alike, dear father? Can I not prove my love by songs, by dear words that go into the heart? Must we all labor. for those we love?"

"Thou shalt have all things in thine own way, my love," said Hugo. "All I ask is that thou shouldst love me, and keep a true heart."

"That I will, dear father. I will sing a song the spirit sang me up in the mountain. Now hearken; he sang in this wise. I begged him to come to me, for I saw his eyes, but he only cried: isn't it crying, dear Margery, when our eyes let down little fountains?"

"True, child, but what a way thou hast of talking; thou wilt never learn sense, unless the master curb thee somewhat."

Mary patted her father's chin, and began to sing a few words in a very low voice;

> List away, list away, every where
> Sweetest sounds are sweetest ringing,
> Evermore on the earth; in the air
> Flower bells are lightly swinging:
> In the dark mine darkly lying,
> Cold, congealed, I languished there,
> But thy blessed mother dying
> Baptized me to light and air.

"Didst thou hear that song up in the mountains, child?" said Hugo, thoughtfully.

"That I did, dear father, and I should have heard more, only then I looked on a shelf of rock, and there sat a toad squatted down; out of his moving throat I heard words which I must not speak."

"Nay, but thou canst speak them to me, child." Mary recoiled with a pale face. "Didst thou not say I must love thee, and keep a true heart, even but just now?"

Hugo was rebuked, and Margery groaned aloud.

"It is well thy blessed wife is not here to see thee tempt the child. If she has fallen into the power of a bad spirit, thou shouldst wrestle for her deliverance."

"Indeed, it was an ill song that of the toad, father, and I was glad when he crawled back into his den, for the words were sharp, like the pang of tears; I grew cold, and the song of the bright spirit ceased. But I will go peep into Bernerd's well, and hear his mother call me an imp, and bid me go knit; Bernerd will have one blow the less, and one thought the more. I know in her heart she loves me, though her tongue and heart never go together."

Bernerd was giving water to a neglected ass, which but for him would have fared poorly every day, and he now brought out grain and gave the poor beast to eat, declaring none ever knew want who fed God's simple creatures. Then the two scattered grain upon the sides of the rock, and waited to see the birds come down to gather it up.

"Out upon ye, for thriftless children that ye are," cried the dame, seizing the measure of grain and folding it in her apron. "Did not the Master send me the very stuff ye are wasting? and you, Bernerd, should go put it in the mill, that we may have cakes to eat, and not scatter it to the birds of the air."

Bernerd opened his large mouth and small eyes wide, and looked at his mother and then at Mary.

"Go home, child," continued the dame, "go knit and sew, and not shame the memory of thy mother. Nothing has gone right in the glen since the death of the dear lady. Alack, alack, the pride of the Master was hardly met, when his dear lady wife died, and the Salamander grew in the furnace. God preserve us from evil;" and she looked carefully round, and stroked at the same time the head of little Mary. "And now the furnace has been burning almost seven years more, and I dare say the Master will try and see if another Salamander will come of it, till they will be so thick that the furnace will burn with Satan's own fuel."

CHAPTER NINTH.

SIMPLE HAPPINESS—HUGO ASCENDS INTO DANGEROUS HEIGHTS—THE TOAD—EARTH-SPIRITS—A GREAT MYSTERY.

Hugo could not forbear thinking of what the child had said about the toad; the 'song of the toad!' He wondered what it could mean, for he had never heard that the toad had any voice at all, far less one of song. While casting this about in his mind he ascended the Nun-da-wá-o up to the brink of the fountain, and stood upon a ledge of the mountain rock, from whence he beheld a fair country spread out before him. There were his own cattle upon many hills, and goodly pastures, with here and there a stately tree laying its shadow opposite the sun and inviting the sheep to fold themselves beneath. Then arose the pleasant smoke from low-roofed dwellings upon which the slender grass and the leek grew nearest the caves, making a cheerful fringe to the brown covering, dotted with moss.

While he stood thus, a single horn*

> * This primitive signal still prevails in the valley, and the not unmusical cadence prolonged by the mountain echoes is suggestive of associations at once tranquil and pleasing.

sounded through the glen, the signal for the men to cease the labors of the forge, for the red daylight was already beginning to fade. And now the men were seen alone or in groups returning to their houses, whistling and singing, and caressing their children who came forth to be taken by the hand and led homeward; here the good wives met them at the door, each in a cleanly apron and tidy kirtle, and hair suitably adorned. Margery came forth with a staid yet pleasant greeting for Ralph, who told her how the white-faced cow was nearly dried of her milk, and of the Master's sheep two had brought forth twin-lambs. Then Margery told of the cheese, full two hundred in the dairy, large in size, and yellow as crocus, and they two went to see that the bees were well cared for.

While Hugo saw these things where he stood high up in the mountain, his eyes followed the sparks from the furnace, and he began to wonder that he should hear the sound of the flame at such a distance. Then he bethought himself and looked around, for what he had supposed the sound from the heat of the forge proceeded from something close to his feet, at which he marveled, seeing nothing. It was a short tinkling sound as if many metallic substances rang against one another, and crystals clicked their angles fretfully, yet all making most clear and beautiful melody. Observing more closely, Hugo beheld a toad squatted close to his ear upon a shelf of the rock, whose eyes were brighter than sapphires, and every spot upon his mottled sides had become a gem*

> * At the time of our story, superstitions, now lost, seem to have been current respecting the toad. Shakspeare tells of the "precious jewel in his head," and the divine Milton makes Satan to assume its shape, and "squat like a toad close to the ear of Eve," that he might the better infuse his subtle poison. It figured largely in ancient incantations, and. even our own Indians were not without mysterious associations connected therewith. They called it, according to Schoolcraft, O-muck-ak-e, which signifies black earth.
>
> The valley of the Ramapo fully sustains its early reputation in regard to this animal, the Editor having seen the earth literally swarming with them, in the month of July; they were of small size, very alert, and nearly the color of the soil, hopping in all directions, so that the foot was in constant danger of crushing them; this to one the least superstitious is a thing carefully to be avoided, as, "to kille a toade prognostigath evil lucke, and if you have kine they will yield a bloodie milke." Occasionally the toad becomes a powerful antidote to other evils as an old writer directs: "For ye protection from witchcraft, for witches do oft time greatly torment ye kine, keep a toad well fattened in a pitcher; also to drive away mice do ye same."

while he sang:—

> In the cavern we lie hidden,
> Gem, and crystal, diamond stone,
> Buried are we, and forbidden
> To lay bare our glittering throne.
> Mystic numbers, sacred symbols,
> Break the spell that now enthralls us.
> Hark the tabor and the timbrels;
> Up, my braves, the music calls us.

Instantly the toad began to move itself up and down, thrusting out its short loose legs in the strangest fashion, and with great apparent glee. Its head moved from side to side, keeping time to the music, and its eyes grew every moment more brilliant. While Hugo looked on laughing, and he laughed in the loudest manner, for he was a bluff hearty man, he began to move to and fro, and wag his head with the toad. Then he saw that another had joined them in the shape of a serpent, whereat he drew back in terror; but the snake came on, erecting his head and glowing in his burnished folds, till he came opposite to the man Hugo, when he began to move from side to side, and Hugo did the same, with wonderful ease and pleasure; the dance growing more and more rapid, and the snake, no more a snake, but a column of rubies and diamonds and all precious stones, changing and flashing and tinkling their sharp points, and rolling and writhing in the ecstasy of light; just as a skillful youth tosses many marbles

into the air, catching them before they fall to· the ground, and they ring sharply as they click one another.

There was a slight crash, and Hugo saw as it were into the bowels of the mountain. He stooped himself and peered down, wondering from whence came so great a light. Then he saw that the earth opened, revealing a great funnel, the sides of which consisted of projections or little shelves upon which rested swarthy creatures, whose eyes were gems, and lighted the cavern. As Hugo looked, they each turned themselves heavily and rolled their eyes upon him; and as they did so, each lifted a filmy paw, and showed a jewel which he held beneath, so bright as to dazzle the eyes and cast a flash like that of the firefly when he lifteth his wings. Hugo felt his heart burning with desire; he longed to reach out his hand and seize the wealth held under those black claws; but he was at a loss which to take, for every moment one more gorgeous than the last met his eyes.

Still peering downward, he beheld upon the floor of the cavern a huge brown creature studded with crimson, which clung to the ground as the haliotis clings to the rock; but seeing the eager desire of Hugo, he lifted himself and showed what he held concealed; and the man saw a burning triangle, with a word written in fire, and he knew that that was the word, which spoken gives dominion over the whole earth.

Hugo roused himself with a great shout, trying to pronounce the word; three times did he shout, and three times did the word escape him; as when a person would sneeze and the power is lost just in the act, so was it with him, and he was filled with a great rage. When he would have tried again, he felt a finger soft and cool laid in the shape of a cross upon his lips, whereat the oaths which were gathering there fell backward, and he saw the fair stately form of his wife looking tenderly upon him, but she did not speak. When Hugo would have spread forth his arms to her, he met only the night air; the pale stars were shining reproachfully upon him, and the· summer air lifted his locks from his bare head. He saw the toad plump itself into a hole, and the tail of the serpent twirl spirally as he slunk away among the rocks. Hugo thought of his wife, and for awhile the vision of the mountain lost its power, for his true human heart yearned with an exceeding love, which made all things else poor and unworthy.

CHAPTER TENTH.

LOWLINESS FULL OF GOD'S BEST BLESSINGS—THE PRIDE OF HUGO—THE TALISMANIC WORD HELD BY FALLEN SPIRITS—FATAL TO THE SOUL—"DELIVER US FROM EVIL"—A STRANGER.

In the morning when Hugo saw his people in holiday trim going out to the fields and mountains, singing pleasant songs, and. dancing with garlands in their hands, because the labors of the forge were suspended, he felt a contempt for their poor pleasure, and wondered how men could rejoice in such small things. He grew bitter at heart, and thought of the beautiful workmanship of his shop, the sword and casque and goodly fashioning of steel, such as brave men delight in. He thought to move at the head of armies—to sit upon powerful thrones, and exult in the smiles of jeweled beauty, were alone worthy to be called happiness. What was life in this poor glen, with these singing and dancing youth, who grew gray under common toil, and died and were forgotten, just as their fathers had been! While these bitter thoughts stirred within him, his daughter came forth decked in garlands, and Dame Margery stood at the door smiling to see how lithe and beautiful she looked beside the heavier made maidens of the hamlet.

Mary came forward, dancing to the music of her own song, and placed herself at the head of a troop of girls who sang in concert—

Under the greenwood tree,
Down from the mountain
Murmurs the honey bee,
Rushes the fountain.

Birds in the forest sing,
Gladness imparting;
Blooms in the desert spring
Insects are darting.

No spot forgotten lies
Reft of its beauty;
Bending the azure skies
Whisper of duty.

Pleasant the Sabbath song,
Labor completed
Swell we the anthem long,
Joyful repeated.

Hugo looked upon his child with a fierce frown as she came on singing, so that the words died upon her lips, and her limbs drooped heavily: she stood looking timidly into his face, wondering what it could mean.

Then she put her hand in his, and bade the maidens go on and leave her. They paused a moment—then resumed the dance, heavily at first, for they missed their leader; and angry at the looks of the Master, they muttered as they went to each other, calling him 'a bear'—'an ugly old man,' 'a crabbed tyrant,' and one more courageous than the rest said loud enough to be heard, "she was glad such a black old churl was not her father."

Hugo placed his daughter upon a white palfrey, while he mounted a heavy black charger, and they went forth together, following the river as it wound itself out of the glen into the open plain. Mary forgot her grief, and carolled like a bird, hoping to make her father smile. She darted ahead at full speed, and then returned showering roses in her path, and bound the head of her father's horse with a gay chaplet. Hugo smiled at the fooleries of the girl, for he bethought himself of her mother, and restrained his moodiness.

When they came out where the country spread itself into a broad meadow, with the river rolling onward and the silent forest, and the high mountains lay against the sky, the girl drew with feelings of awe to the side of her father, and rode on in silence. Ever and anon the clear sound of a bugle swelled out, and then died away in the distance—while the baying of hounds told of courtly sport. Mary looked on every side, but neither dwelling nor human being was to be seen, but jangling the bells of her harness she caught the spirit of life which the bugle implied, and rode gayly onward.

Reaching a lovely glade where the birches trembled lightly over a stream, Hugo dismounted, and they sat down upon the bank. The girl feared to disturb the silence of her father, so she nestled to his side and pulled the violets for lack of something to do. At length he said:

"Mary, what is the word which the spirit keeps up in the mountain? I have tried to speak it, and am not able."

"It is an ill word, dear father, that removes the soul from God."

"Nevertheless, speak it," said Hugo.

"I dare not speak a word, that will mix my nature with earth-spirits, dear father."

"Thou art but a cowardly girl," cried Hugo; "did I not see wealth such as the greatest monarch might envy, and did I not see thrones and power within my grasp, save that this palsied tongue could not seize the word!"

While her father spoke in this wise, Mary grew pale, and knelt with her hands folded in silence. At length she spoke:

"It is a fearful word, dear father, which causes the crystal gates of Paradise to glide upon their hinges and shut the utterer out for ever."

Hugo ground his teeth firmly, and said in a voice terrible, it was so firm and loud—

"Speak, child—I would know it."

Then Mary prayed, saying, "Oh, my God! let the knowledge fade out from my soul, that I may never be guilty of this great sin."

"Speak," said her father, turning pale with a great rage.

The clear face of the child was turned to that of the dark man, and a fair smile was on her lips as she answered,

"God has heard my prayer, dear father, I know it not."

"Thou liest,"answered the fierce man, and he struck the child with his heavy palm.

Mary threw her arms around the neck of her father, pale and trembling, whereat a sudden pang of remorse filled him with shame and grief; but when he saw how still she lay in his arms he grew fearful, and raised her up and looked into her face. She lay without breath or motion, and although he sprinkled water in her face from the brook, and called her passionately back to life, she did not lift up the fringes of her lids. He groaned, and, made weak and passionate, he tore his hair, and uttered strange and blasphemous words, at which her spirit seemed of a sudden to be forced back into her body, and she raised up her eyes and hands crying, "Be pitiful, o thou good father, be pitiful, and forgive."

At this moment the whole pack of hounds broke from the covert of the woods, in full cry, followed by the huntsmen; with shouts and bugle-cheer, dashing across an angle of the meadow they re-entered the forest, bearing with them the pangs of the poor, hunted, hapless little beast, and their own exulting shouts, which died away and were lost in the murmurs of the river.

Hugo's lip curled bitterly. "And but for thee I might overawe these with my wealth and power."

Again the child wound her arms about the neck of her father. "I cannot tell the word, for the good God has taken it away."

"Thou hast no love for me—old Hugo of the glen may be crushed and scorned, for that he has never dodged the curse of labor, and his own child cares not that he is despised."

"Nay, nay, I love thee, my father; but it is the good God who hath placed thee thus; and till thou didst listen to an evil song, thy lot was not distasteful to thee."

While they were yet speaking they did not perceive that a youth had left the train of hunters, and approached them. He was tall and slender, with blue eyes clear and bright, and flowing golden locks. He bade them good-morrow in courtly wise and then questioned them as to the iron-works in the glen, and whether it were true, as was said by rumor, that a marvelous beast had grown in the furnace in years hack.

"Yes," said Hugo, with a defiant and scoffing voice; "a rare and comely beast it was, since which time a new temper has grown upon the blades of my making, and caused their fame to spread far and wide—a fair beast, a right comely beast it was, and but for the prating cowardice of my people I would have another of the same kind in sooth."

"What! art thou the Master Hugo, then?" inquired the youth.

Hugo drew himself up, and then inclined his head but slightly, in answer to the young man, who replied:

"There will never be another Salamander, good Hugo, for the last exile has passed the gate of fire;" and he crossed himself reverently.

Hugo looked searchingly into the face of the stranger, but as he said nothing more, they mounted their horses and turned homeward.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

THE MISSION OF PEACE THE GREAT MISSION—A KNIGHTLY PASSAGE OF ARMS—A RARE SWORD—MATERIAL KNOWLEDGE BELONGING TO EARTH-SPIRITS—WATER AND LIFE IN THE BLOSSOM—THE BELOVED OF GOD ONLY ABLE TO PRODUCE THEM.

"The last exile has passed the gate of fire," repeated Mary to herself as they rode onward, but she dared not inquire into the meaning of the youth, and so she kept silence.

Their companion was a gay young man whose tongue discoursed most pleasantly, and who referred to parts entirely unknown to Mary and but partially so to Hugo. He had good store of courtly anecdote, and rare tales of human affection, and mishaps, such as befall men in the chase, and brave men upon battle-field, but when these were told he would add,

"Nevertheless, to make the desert bloom, to bring peace to a perturbed heart, or to teach God's truth, is better than all this."

At which Mary looked confidingly into his face, but Hugo wondered that one who had shared these things should hold them in contempt; and he replied,

"Thou sayest this only in regard to our lowliness, for in sooth, thou wert but a craven knight to despise thy birth."

The cheek of the stranger reddened, and Mary looked when he should reply with flash of steel, for old Hugo did not fail to glance at the jeweled hilt of the stranger, while he touched his own heavy sword; on the contrary, he smiled faintly and said,

"These pass away, but to do good is a part of the Eternal."

Hugo struck his spurs into his horse impatiently, and then reined in the creature with an oath, for he had hoped to find a bolder spirit in the young man; who seeing how it was, suddenly drew his sword from its sheath, and wheeling round his horse confronted the master with a defiant gesture; whereat Mary would have screamed with terror had not the bright smile of the stranger belied the words upon his tongue.

"A fair field and no favor," he shouted, thrusting at the stout Hugo, who parried his sword with great skill, and for awhile the clash of their steel resounded through the glen. The sunshine flashed merrily from their blades and hopped from leaf to rock, and the birds darted away not knowing what it all meant. At length the broad sword of Hugo lay shivered upon the ground, and he gave a constrained laugh as he made the mimic sign of submission.

"Nay, nay," said the stranger, "it is but an exchange of weapons, and thou wilt find mine worthy thine own making."

Hugo examined the sword curiously.

"In good truth 'tis a rare brand—a most rarely tempered steel. By my faith, a goodly sword!" and the envy of the artificer brought a scowl to his face, not unperceived by his guest.

"Its hardness and strength are great, good master, but 'tis a poor art, one that the meanest earth-spirit can teach."

"How?" cried Hugo.

"By a knowledge of all material elements, they are able to compound with little effort, and produce rare and beautiful shapes."

"Tell me where I may get this knowledge," said Hugo.

"By so doing thou wouldst peril thine eternal redemption," replied the stranger in a solemn tone; "thou wouldst incorporate thyself with the material, and the blood and the water of salvation would be denied thee."

"'Tis a brave wisdom; why should it exist if evil be in it?"

The youth reined in his horse, and looked indignantly at the scoffing man.

"All knowledge and power must exist, and man is free to choose. Who will choose to be of the earth, earthy, and forget that it is the spirit that giveth life? The spirit is eternal, while the heavens themselves wax old as doth a garment. Will a man perish with earth, or live with the spirit? He must know all things if he will—error even, yet must he choose the good and the true as the enduring things of the spirit."*

> * Men are wont to lay great stress upon what they call the rewards of virtue, mistaking the nature of reward. A part of the beautiful harmony of the universe consisteth in this, that every thing is repaid in kind. Material labor is returned by material good in the shape of gold and silver, houses and lands. Intellectual labor by a proportionate degree of human fame—but what may be properly called virtue, the sacrifice of the instincts to a high or holy sentiment—the denial of self—the practice of temperance, justice, and beneficence, which are promptings of a part of our nature not tangible by the senses, and therefore not capable of material remuneration—these must have altogether an intangible return so far as the senses go; that is, they are of the spirit, and are rewarded in spiritual kind.
>
> From this I deduct the strongest argument in favor of the existence of a moral government and of a God—since if all material shapes have an origin in matter, spiritual consciousness must have an origin in spirit; spirit from spirit—I find it easier to conceive that matter might not exist, than that spirit does not. Hence, nothing would seem more natural than that He, from whom the soul must have emanated, should reward its good actions with a double portion of that divine peace, and that enlarged goodness of which he is the fountain.—E. H.

He was silent a moment, and then he bowed his head reverently, and said in a low voice,

"Forgive me, Oh God! why did I not say because it is thy Will, thou All Knowing?"

Hugo would have replied fiercely, but the pious gentleness of the stranger disarmed him, though he did not fail to ponder upon what he had heard. At length he asked,

"Hast thou this knowledge, young man? For indeed thou speakest as one knowing of these matters."

Mary perceived the stranger shudder, as from a sharp pang, and she wished her father had spared the question, but he answered at once:

"Yes, I have been long enchained in the elements—long subject to the material, nor am I yet entirely escaped. God's children are his ministers, made for loving service—not for power and selfish rule."

"Thy words are blind to me," answered Hugo; "tell me who thou art."

"I am one of God's creatures, waiting for his mercy," the stranger answered.

Hugo gave a light whistle and rode on, but Mary answered—"I in part understand thee, but a knowledge which came to me in my long sleep, has so nearly faded from my mind, that I do not quite reach thy meaning. Since morning, too, I have prayed the good Father to resume all, lest the desire for wealth and power should bring evil upon us."

"Yes," retorted Hugo; "she has the word and refuses to pronounce it."

"Nay, nay, good father, I have lost it now."

"How didst thou lose it?" inquired the stranger. Mary glanced at her father, and was silent; for she was a dutiful and most loving child, unwilling to expose what was unseemly in a parent. But he answered scornfully:

"I bade her speak the word, that Hugo of the glen might make himself known beyond these poor rocks; that his brave swords and goodly steeds and worthy followers might be the terror and the joy of men; and she, my beautiful child, should move in jeweled robes; and queens should stoop to her feet, and kings sigh in vain for a smile from her proud lips. Alas! that my fair wife is not here to share the triumph."

He had spoken with a loud voice and flushed brow, as if all were as his fancy conceived; and he now paused, and looking sullenly at his hearers, continued:

"Ye think the master beside himself, but it is all true."

"I know it is," replied the young man; "but I would give more to bring one fair blossom from the earth, than to be master of all this pomp."

"Beshrew thee for the meanness of thy spirit," cried Hugo; "the weeds are plenty enough, but the gem and the gold, before which men bow down, are rare and deeply hidden,"

"The water and the life are in the blossom, types of the spirit and proofs of God's favor, while the gem is all of the earth. I could easily compound for thee a diamond, which is of the element of fire, but the simplest flower to gladden the heart of thy child is beyond my ability—God still withholds this gift, and therefore, I know I am not yet purified from my sin."

This candor of their guest surprised them both, but Hugo looked at the fair young face, and answered: "Thou art too young to have sinned deeply; and now, I bethink me, thou art the one beside thyself, to talk of making gems and flowers; but come thy way, I like thee, young man, none the less for thy madness."

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

THE PRINCELY BEARING OF HUGO—HIS PRIDE AND AMBITION—THE HOUSEHOLD EFFECT OF THE STRANGER—THE BLOOD OF REDEMPTION SHED FOR MORTALS, BUT OF NO AVAIL WITH ANGELS—THE TENDERNESS OF MARGERY; HER WOMANLY PRIDE.

The presence of the stranger in the valley was a great joy to Hugo, who thus found a companion most courteous and social, and who brought the great world once more before him; for Hugo had traveled much abroad before his marriage, and was not unfamiliar with the usages prevailing at courts. Since the death of his father, his estates, and the iron-works which were his by inheritance, had engaged nearly all his time; such too had been his grief at the death of his wife, that he felt little desire to go beyond the neighborhood of the valley, contenting himself with directing his men, and receiving such guests as business or inclination called thither. In truth the good hospitality of Hugo was known far and wide; and his pride and bluff manliness gave him no small importance.

The products of the forge were of the fairest kind, and such as no one for many and many leagues could produce. Therefore Hugo, being a rich artisan, had no need to force his labor, and people were fain to approach him with a deference not ungratifying. He could stay the stoutest cavalier by refusing him aid in his armor or the gear of his horse. Hemmed in by lofty mountains, and the magnificence of overhanging forests, extending for a thousand miles from side to side, and only broken by the gorges of hills through which wandered deep and beautiful rivers, flowing onward like living voices uttering psalms of praise; the solitude in which he thus lived, invested him with remoteness and grandeur. Still beyond the valley was a larger river, which God's young and untaught children had likened unto a stately swan,*

* Shatemac, or the Stately Swan. The Hudson river so called.

which twice a day felt the overcharged heart of the hoary old sea beat in huge pulsations, and crowd the waters inward till they were piled against the everlasting hills.

Old Hugo exulted in the grandeur of this wild region, and as he ascended to the top of the Nun-da-wá-o†

† We suspect the hill here spoken of must be the one now known as the High Torn; indeed there can be little doubt as to the fact, and it is pleasant to link the associations of a later day with those described in the earlier settlement of Helfenstein. The High Torn, or Nun-da-wá-o, is the highest point of this branch of the Catskill mountains, commanding not only a view of the Hudson, Hackensack, Passaic, and many smaller rivers, and lakes of rare beauty, but also of the Long Island Sound a distance of thirty miles.

While Washington was encamped in the valley he was in the habit of ascending this peak to watch the movements of the British naval power, and prior to his last great movement of forces to Yorktown, he anxiously watched, from the top of the Torn the final passage of the French fleet on its way to Virginia in aid of the American army.

There is a curious incident recorded in connection with this circumstance. A shelf of the rock is still shown where the great man was in the habit of placing his watch, spy-glass, &c., on these occasions. Once it so happened that his watch slipped into a crevice of the rock, past recovery, and by putting the ear down, its mournful and ceaseless "tick" may still be heard. No one of the least poetic fancy will be willing to explain away the phenomenon.

where the hills undulated and bowed beneath him, and the mighty Dunderburg sat monarch in the midst crowned with vapors, for he was king of the clouds; he recalled the memories of the Hartz mountains with their stirring legendary, and then he spread forth his arms, yearning wildly to embrace once more the home of his childhood.

It was a brave sight, the cloudy battalions of old Dunderburg spreading themselves host beyond host, rejoicing with the merry dancers of the north, or trooping after the setting sun. Sometimes in spite, before he disappeared in the west, the golden monarch of the day stole the misty cap from the head of old Dunderburg, and left his bald but regal top exposed to the whole wondering army of lesser hills.

Here in the midst of this vast and storied region, where the beautiful nestled timidly to the side of the gigantic, the stone castle of Hugo seemed to the simple denizens of the hamlet the very excellence of stateliness and grandeur. Strangers, as they caught a view of it from some mountain peak, and saw the furnaces and forges glowing with perpetual heat, and a hundred anvils sending up a loud but not unpleasing ring, heard far into the solitude, became impressed with a sense of awe, which did not abate when they beheld the fashioning of the castle, the ordering of the household, and the noble bearing of the master; for, indeed, he moved amid his thousand men with the stateliness of an old baron, and such, indeed was his blood.

Then when he led forth his fair and beautiful daughter, clad in robes rarely to be seen in that region, and she herself maidenly yet most noble in her bearing, the wonder increased; and Hugo would have enjoyed the surprise and the triumph, had not his heart whispered that more, much more was within their reach, for the spells of the earth-spirits and the unspoken word haunted him day and night. The gaping admiration of the rustics annoyed more than it pleased him, while the chance enthusiasm of wandering Jesuit or wayfaring Huguenot but provoked the desire for more courtly trappings, and the pomp of regal throne and gorgeous battle-field.

To a man like him the company of the stranger was a source of great and unwonted pleasure, not the less that with a gentle dignity the youth did not fail to rebuke the insolent pride of Hugo, whom no one before had dared to withstand. Indeed the hearts of the whole household warmed kindly toward him, and were each and all emulous of good offices. Dame Margery, especially, loved him with a maternal tenderness, often telling him, that his looks were those of the dear lost Hugo, whereat he became pale and sorrowful, and once replied;

"The sufferings of him whom thou callest the lost Hugo, are great indeed, but the good God will deliver him, if he fail not." Whereat Margery took his hand fondly in hers, and obeying the impulse of her pious heart, she ejaculated:

"Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, redeem him from evil, even by the blood of the holy child Jesus."

The youth bowed low, and reverently answered: "It cannot be, good mother; the blood of the Redeemer will cleanse the mortal nature, for whom it was shed, but an erring Angel must pass the ordeal of trial and flame ere he be restored to the lowest point of Infinite Mercy. Nevertheless, I thank thee; thy words are the cup of water given in the hour of need for the love of God, and they shall not fail of reward."

Margery looked into the face which was at once still and holy, yet with the rosy*

* "Celestial rosy red, Love's proper hue," says Milton. There seems to be a peculiar appropriateness in this term of Helfenstein's, after his assertion that these benevolent angels were of the nature of flame, which is love.

hue of the lost Hugo, and she cried: "Surely, surely, thou art the lost child, and I knew it not."

At this moment the master approached unseen by Margery, and he cried:

"Woman, have I not told thee to name that child no more? and now thou pratest like a poor gossip of that which is beyond thy judgment."

Dame Margery was ashamed of this rebuke in the presence of the stranger, and she answered sharply:

"It is well, indeed, and fitting for the master to intrust his child and the ordering of his household to a woman who is a gossip, and weak in judgment!" but seeing her husband Ralph looking anxiously after her, she smoothed her flushed face, and laid her hand upon his arm, with a wife-like courtesy most touching, for the high spirit of

Margery did not make her cold of heart, nor vixenish of tongue; and when the master said,

"Thy pardon, my good Margery," she courtesied in stately wise and was content.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

MAIDENLY AFFECTION—THE GRIEF OF MARY—SPIRITS OF THE NUN-DA-WA-O—PLEADINGS OF THE GOOD—A SPIRIT WIFE—THE UNSPOKEN WORD—THE MYSTERY OF THREE—A DELIVERANCE—THE BEAUTY AND EFFICACY OF OBEDIENCE—THE TOAD DOOMED TO SILENCE—HIS PUNISHMENT.

The stranger remained many weeks a guest of the castle, to the no small pleasure of Hugo and all the household, till it became apparent that Mary, the sweet gentle Mary, was more avoided by him than seemed necessary or comely to so gallant a youth; and when it was observed that this coldness appeared painful to the maiden, they began to look upon him with severe scrutiny. The habits of the stranger were often solitary, and his air that of one laboring under a deep internal grief. Mary saw this, and by a thousand winning and maidenly efforts strove to bring him into more cheerful harmony with the fair world, and her own loving spirit.

She grew thoughtful, and her soul expanded under feelings so new that she could not comprehend their origin. Often would she ask tales of foreign parts, and about the great world so strange to herself. The youth talked, but in a manner so calm and cold, that the girl felt as if congealing to an inanimate creature, as if all the beautiful impulses of her young nature were driven back and frozen within the cells of the heart. He rarely cast a glance at her speaking face, and her accents of sisterly tenderness were met with something so like rebuke, that the girl thrilled with the shame of wounded pride. True he was courteous and manly, his bearing that of a true and honorable guest; yet so much reserve argued either devotion to another or the sanctity of a religious vow, by which he was bound to reject human sympathy, and live superior to the tenderness of womanhood.

Dame Margery was the first to detect the secret grief of Mary, and she took the child to her maternal bosom, pressed her cheek fondly to her own, and said:

"Let it not shame thee, child, that the stranger is dear to thee; but thou must love him as a brother, for I am convinced there is mystery about him, and he is the lost Hugo."

Mary shuddered at these words, and whispered: "Say no more, dear mother Margery, but indeed he is not my brother," and she wept bitterly.

Margery hastened to the master and begged him to send the youth away, for the peace of the household would be ruined if he staid longer. Hugo gave a loud whistle, and this was followed by a bluff laugh, which greatly vexed the considerate Margery, who courtesied in her stately wise, and then left him to finish the laugh alone.

About this time, Mary grew anxious and sorrowful to perceive that her father ascended every night to the top of the Nun-da-wá-o, and there remained many hours alone. She beheld a pale blue light streaming from the rocks on these occasions, and an

overwhelming terror lest her father in his lust for power and gold should do that which might peril his own soul, wrought fearfully in the mind of the child. On his return after these visits he was moody and pale, and more than once had conjured her to pronounce the word, so essential to secure the great wealth hidden in the mountain and guarded by the spirits of the earth. It was in vain that Mary declared she had no power to speak the word, for it had passed from her mind, as pass away the many strange revealments of sleep-land.

"If thou wilt ascend with me to the mountain," persisted Hugo, "thou mayest hear again the song of the toad, and catch the word, which my paralyzed tongue cannot utter."

"Do not urge me, dear father," answered Mary; "for indeed this must not be."

"Say but the word, Mary, and thou shalt have the dearest wish of thy heart. The youth whom thou lovest shall be thine, for I 'know thou art dear to him also."

A soft redness overspread the face of Mary, but she lifted her head nobly. "I cannot do evil to obtain a good, dear father, for the act would convert it to a curse."

"Thou lovest the stranger," said Hugo.

Mary trembled and shrank aside, for she knew not that it was love; she was about to enter her bower, when her father, taking her by the hand, led her forth toward the mountain. The child wept, but went onward. As they ascended by the side of the Nebena, the stars of the summer sky twinkled and smiled, and the sapphire clouds grew thin; the crescent moon hung awhile upon the rim of the horizon, and then was gone—leaving one bright star behind a moment, and that too disappeared.

"Hark! father, what says the brook to-night? surely it has a new song. See, too, how turbid are its waves."

"I hear nothing but the drops chafing the brim," answered Hugo, gruffly.

"Listen, father; it says, Lost, lost, forever lost—listen!"

"I hear it not; let us hasten, child."

"But father, do you not see the white sad faces, looking down upon us from every side, and do you not see the dear hands spread out?"

"I see nothing, child, but the mist from the valley; come."

Mary shrieked, and drew from her father's side.

"Father, dear father, did you not see the earth-spirit with his red eyes, and filmy wings?"

"I see nothing but the red glare from the furnace." "Oh! my father, surely, surely the earth holds black and terrible shapes—see how they crowd our path."*

> * I find there be very many minds ready to receive the doctrine of good spirits, who reject that of evil spirits, just as there are modern Sadducees, who have never organized themselves into a sect, but rejecting like those of old all belief in the spiritual, they say there is "neither angel nor spirit." These last, who deny their own immortality, we will leave, and consider those who "make evil good" by denying a spirit of evil. If good is positive, evil is also positive; if good angels exist—good being a fact—evil angels exist, evil being a fact also; the argument which upholds the one is the base of the other. Jesus as explicitly teaches of malevolent spirits, the power of whom his doctrines were to overthrow, as of those which "always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven."
>
> The more subtle and delicate perception of Eve caused her soonest to detect the latent and possible element of evil which lurked even in the paradisiacal state, and which had escaped the more inert temperament of her companion. "To be desired to make one wise," was the sentiment which at once lifted her, with a limited nature, into the dangerous affinities of archangelic experiences. After the sleep which fell upon Adam, his nature became more gross than Eve's, whose birth seems to have been a resurrection from his material and death-like slumber, and hence a woman's nicety of sense, and more permanent retention of all spiritual existences. Man, too, was created and placed in Paradise, while woman was the creation of Paradise; man was formed of the dust of the earth—woman arose in the blessedness of Eden, spurning the heaviness and the dust thereof, even after it had been vitalized, purified, and spiritualized in the being of Adam.—E. H.

"On, child, though their name be legion," cried Hugo.

Mary wrung her hands and went on, her sweet lips breathing prayer.

"Father, who is she with the crystal pitcher, who sprinkles drops upon my head, and stretches her arms to thee?"

Hugo ground his teeth, and went on.

"Tell me who she is, dear father; for she tries to cover thee with her wings."

"She is thy mother, child, the only angel that does not forsake me."

Then Mary laid her hand once more in that of her father and went forward, for she thought: "If my angel mother is by, surely the Lord God will appoint a deliverance."

Upon reaching the top of the mountain, she shrunk with pain and terror, for the whole air was alive with sharp ringing music, which cut as it were into the nerves. This proceeded from innumerable swarthy creatures, who lifted up their filmy claws to show the casing of their breasts, which was made of scales of gold or gems, the rolling and shivering of which under their overlapping arms, sent forth a light and a sound. Then they opened their huge mouths, burning like fire, and the rocks gave back the cadence of their hideous mirth. Foremost amid the throng, was a blind serpent,*

> * This must be the rattlesnake, which still makes its den in the mountains of the valley. The propriety of calling him a blind serpent will be perceived when it is recollected that in the dry seasons of summer, the poison of this serpent is secreted to such an excess, as to be re-absorbed into the system, and cause blindness. The allegory which it suggests is at once startling and appalling. The copperhead snake is also found here.

which to this day keeps the tarnished rattles of his former glory, and when filled with rage he pours forth the continuous ring of the gems concealed at the end of his tail.

Poor impotent and vengeful beast, too, he generates, like wicked and envious and malicious human hearts, a poison that bedims and tortures, and filled with his own venom, he becomes blind.

Then again Mary heard the low soft voice of the toad, which stole without noise into the heart, and awakened feelings unknown before; and now the earth opened, and below appeared the burning triangle, and the word of power, whereat Hugo grasped the arm of the white child eagerly and bade her behold and speak, but she was silent.

"Speak," cried the man fiercely, at the same time shouting loudly in his vain efforts to pronounce the word himself. But Mary's large eyes gazed into the depths below, fixed and motionless; and the earth-punished raised their glittering eyes, and lifted their huge paws, and one creature thrust up a black arm from beneath the burning triangle, holding a crown like unto a circlet of fire, and a sceptre. Hugo bent downward with intense longing, but Mary held his hand locked in hers, and then with a long deep breath she whispered, herself unknowing the whole mystery of what she uttered, for she was prompted from above:

"Holy and blessed, and Eternal Three, whose sacred symbol is burning beneath us, Thee, Thee only, do we worship."

"Amen!" responded a voice close to her ear.

They turned and the youth stood beside them, his face beaming as it were with a strange beautiful light; his hands folded and his eyes raised heavenward.

"Now, Lord, I know I am accepted of thee, in that these have been delivered."

The shapes of the material disappeared one by one; the earth closed itself over its hidden treasures; the blind serpent coiled itself as if to strike, and then slunk aside, leaving but the toad, who squatted to the ground and strove to bury itself downward. He moved his throat in vain, for his insidious melody was to be hushed forever, and the gems of his two eyes were to lose their brightness; 'precious jewels' never more to delude the weak human heart.

Beautiful to the vision of the three, leaned over them the still protecting heavens; and the gushing of the brook arose like the benison of the Almighty, while from the thicket below, the soulful voice of the bird that 'sings darkling,' told each and all of those rare and lovely harmonies which wait only for a recipient nature to pour therein a dower of blessedness. Ah! it is within us that is hidden the kingdom of God, and yet we forget the truth and build up the perishable kingdom of earth which is passing away, and haunted by huge and unlovely forms.

And now the toad would have disappeared entirely in the earth, had not the youth called it forth. Heavily, with a sad mute air, and lingering leaps, he approached, and stood at the feet of him whose will he obeyed. Then the youth took a round polished stone from the side of the mountain, and with his two hands opened it in twain. Stooping downward he bade the toad place himself upon the half, which he did, and the youth cried:

"Oh! thou most foul and loathsome, most evil and delusive, by the power given unto me I doom thee to darkness and bonds for a thousand years, and longer unless the good God deliver thee."*

> * Toads have certainly been found cased in a mausoleum of rock, and buried in the fibres of large trees. The poetically speculative mind may not be unwilling to adopt the solution of Helfenstein, that these are earth-spirits bound for a period of years.

Then he laid the other half of the stone upon him, and ground the parts till they became as one, and cast it aside amid the smooth pebbles of the brook.

"Now I perceive, that it was wise in me to give up a knowledge, which became a temptation to evil," said Mary.

"True knowledge," said the youth; "leads on forever to the Universal, but much, very much hath only an earthly significancy, and we lose it at the portals of the Eternal. All thought that is not based upon love must and will perish. But tell me thy meaning; what was the knowledge which thou didst resign?"

Then Mary told him how she had prayed that the word fast by the burning triangle might be taken from the tablet of the soul and be forgotten, and how the merciful Father had granted her request.

The youth sank upon his knees, and lifted up his two hands in attitude of adoration, saying:

"I praise thee—I bless thee, o Infinite and most Merciful! Now know I that my hour of redemption draweth near'; since by the mouth of this child I have been taught a new obedience; a new submission to duty. When nearest Thee, rejoicing in the Infinitude of Thy love, I knew thee not, and yet was lost in adoration; now I learn Thee through obedience, and would come to Thee by Thine own appointed way. Lay thine hand upon me, but in mercy. Take from me a knowledge too infinite for me. Alas! the pride of the archangel has departed; make him as a little child."

He laid his hands crosswise upon his bosom, and bent his head to the earth, and at that moment a cloud which had hung over the mountain burst itself with lightnings and rain, and the fierce element played about the temples of the youth, tossing his fair locks, yet he lifted not his head, and then a voice cried: "Holy and blessed are they who trust and obey, yea and they shall enter in to rest."

Mary would have laid her hand upon the head of the youth—she would have cast herself beside him, but she only breathed, "Even so; and they are blessed whom thou blessest, Oh our Father!" the tears streaming from her eyes.. Lifting them up, she beheld her father standing alone; his arms folded over his broad chest, and the light from the furnace below streaming upon his face, till he looked like a statute of bronze, motionless, stern, and awful, the type of the region of Rockland—as if the hidden metal, rare and terrible, had shaped itself to a man of iron—the prophecy of a coming age.

Mary clung to his arm with all the tenderness of her sweet nature, and kissed his hand, but he moved not, till she laid it upon her brow, and then he bent his eyes downward, but sternly as if struggling with an exceeding internal rage.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

FAITH IN GOD AND OBEDIENCE TO HIS WILL THE MYSTERY OF ANGELIC AS WELL AS OF HUMAN HAPPINESS—A RE-UNION IN THE ETERNAL WORLD—THE LOST ANGEL RECEIVES THE CREATIVE POWER IN THE SHAPE OF LILIES, WHICH IS PURITY.

After this scene upon the mountain, the stranger no longer wore that appearance of extreme sadness, which before had created a painful interest in his behalf: he no longer seemed weighed by those deep and mysterious thoughts, that shadow forth the unseen world, and leave us without the sympathy which alone makes this life cheerful; now a fair serenity diffused itself in his mien, and his face wore a placid and benign candor most lovely to behold. There was a joyful upwardness in his look, and a genial outwardness in his eyes, as if they rested lovingly upon God's creatures, and no longer were content with selfish introversion.

Mary saw the change in the youth with untold delight; she walked by his side and listened to his voice, gathering a higher aspiration from her noble companionship. Light as a fawn, she sported beside the clear brook, and the melody of her song waked the echoes of the glen to sweeter harmonies.

Mary and the youth were wandering beyond the valley where the river opened into the plain, talking as they were wont; they had gone onward, beguiled by their sweet discourse, and did not perceive how the great red sun burnished the hills with golden powder, for the dense trees were about them, and only his sharp light flecked the leaves and glanced upon the boles of the trees, now glinting the shoulders of the red-bird, and now flashing the green mail of the lizard or turning the wings of the dragon-fly to rainbows—anon the coquettish squirrel caught the beam in his full soft eye, and the timid hare showed the tracery of blood in his pink ears as he darted across their path; the mosses were like velvet beneath, and the frail wild flowers, vestal worshipers, meek beautifiers of the wilderness, lifted themselves in their solitude, content only with the blessing of the good Father.

Mary drew to the side· of the youth, and laid her hand in his, but he gently removed his own and placed it upon the jeweled hilt of his sword. Mary's cheek turned to crimson; she faltered, and, stung with pride, the tears gushed to her eyes. At this moment, they heard a low growl above their heads, and splinters of bark were scattered at their feet; looking up they perceived a panther just in the act to spring, 'with his terrible eyes fixed upon the victims below. Instantly the sword of the young man sprang from its sheath, and the ferocious beast alighted in his deadly leap upon its point.

When Mary recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen, she found the youth. standing over the prostrate animal whose blood was dripping from his sword and

garments, and she shrieked with terror, supposing that he must have been wounded. With kindly and respectful courtesy, he lifted her from the ground, and seating himself by her side, implored her to be tranquil.

"I must leave thee, Mary; for I feel assured that my pilgrimage is near its close."

Mary could only weep.

"There is much that I would tell thee, Mary; but I know not whether thou art able to bear it," the youth at length said.

"Shall we meet again?" faltered the child in a low voice. His face contracted with a sharp pang, and he murmured, "Oh, my God! deliver thou me."

"Mary, I am in deadly peril; I beseech thee question me not," he replied.

Mary looked into his eyes, so full of their clear unearthly light; so full of all that makes a human heart a well-spring of ineffable blessedness, and overcome with the flood of girlish sympathy, she cast her arms about his neck, and murmured, "do not leave me."

Poor child! the youth arose sternly from the ground, and placing one foot upon the shoulder of the beast he had just slain, turned his back to the girl, who shrank to the earth, and buried her face in the masses of curls that clustered about her neck. At length, the sobs of the child touched even his stern heart, and he turned himself around: but oh! the grief and agony on his face had done in minutes the work of years. He who a moment before had been fair and smooth as the boy of eighteen summers, was now rigid, stern, and marked by those outlines of thought, which come only when the soul has wrestled with some mighty grief, even like unto that of the Patriarch of old, when he wrestled all night with the Angel of God.

"Mary," he said, sinking on his knees beside the girl, "I must tell thee all, and then if thou dost weep, and lament, the judgment of the Eternal will be completed in me."

Mary lifted her head—"Thou wilt go—shall we not meet again?"

The youth groaned heavily.

Mary's pure nature taught her that she was giving pain, and casting her selfishness aside, she said:

"Wilt thou pardon my folly? forget me, unless thou canst also forget this unmaidenly scene."

The youth buried his face in his hands, and through the fingers Mary saw the tears trickle, but the nature of them was soothing and holy.

"I shall never forget thee, Mary; wherever in the mysteries of God I may be transferred, the holiness of thy affection will cause this cheerless earth, in which and for which I have suffered so much, to be none other than the Paradise of God;" and stooping downward he touched the tears, which had fallen upon the earth, and they became a chaplet of lilies with which he bound the head of Mary.

"Dost thou remember the gems I once gave thee, Mary? Then I had power over only the element of fire, which burns and consumes, or hardens to the rock, but now the water and the life are mine—behold these lilies—wear them—for thou art worthy."

He turned his steps as if to depart.

"Shall we meet again?" implored the child. The youth lifted his head sorrowfully. "Shall we meet again?" he repeated; "for thy sake, for mine, I have questioned too. The knowledge of the future was once mine, but I resigned it as thou didst thy dangerous knowledge, and now the eternal world is hidden from me; I tread the valley of darkness more dismayed, than even a human soul; now—now, O that I could see! What is faith to the once prescient Archangel?" and he cast himself to the earth, overcome with his terrible thoughts.

"Shall we not meet again? Oh! in the long eternal years shall I not yearn for the look, the tone, for which even now I peril my redemption? What is that terrible future? How shall the soul exist floating onward for ever and for ever, with a universe of suns receding from its path, if it bear not with it the known and the loved? How will it shiver and shrink from the gray twilight of the eternal, unless folded in the wings of a love which, though born of earth, leads onward to God? Mary, Mary"—his voice ceased, and he fell prostrate to the earth.

The girl cast herself upon his neck, and kissed the lips from which the blood of life had departed, and then seeing his eyes unclose, her maidenly pride returned, and she lifted herself and stood by his side, with her eyes bent downward.

The youth arose to his knees.

"Oh! my God! when the shadows of death compass me about, and the portals of the eternal slide aside on their harmonious hinges—is there no chord once human to vibrate in accordance with mine? Must I enter alone that unknown land—I an archangel once, now less than the feeblest child? Nevertheless, thy will, not mine, be done;" and he bowed reverently.

Then Mary saw that his lips were parched as by thirst, and she shook the water from the nectaries of a lily and it fell coolingly upon his brow, whereat he smiled faintly.

"Thy words are mysterious. I do not comprehend thee," she said; "but I will wait content not to know, sooner than give thee pain."

"Thy meekness shall bring its own blessing," responded the youth.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

TRIALS OF THE HUMAN—MORE BLESSED TO LEARN THAN TO KNOW—THE ANGEL NATURES TWO IN ONE—THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY—SILEEP A CONSEQUENCE OF MATERIAL LONGING—THE DISSEVERED MAN—GRIEF IN HEAVEN—THE FIRST BIRTH—LOST ANGELS—A LEGEND.

The two sat down that summer night and talked till the sun cast his last ray upon the spire of the pine, and the moon walked midway to the heavens, rejoicing in her sisterhood of stars, for they had cast aside their misty veils and moved onward without a cloud.

"Wear thy chaplet of lilies upon thy brow, and in thy heart, Mary," said the youth; "thou art redeemed by the blood of the blessed child Jesus; but for me, me it avails not—I make my way upward to the presence of God through a great love, and an obedience tested by many trials; thou art my last—my greatest temptation."

"I—I," said Mary; "God forbid!—who—what art thou?"

"The time is come sooner than I had thought—Listen, child.

"Look upon this earth—it is most beautiful—the lily, the rose, the amaranth are here; creatures primal in their beauty—yet each have lost a shade of their original brightness. Once the angels of God came and went here, and sang harmonies amid pleasant bowers; and the first man,*

> * We find the following note in the handwriting of Helfenstein, unessential to the unity of the work, but which we have preserved as prepared by himself—it may elucidate some of those views and speculations which so often absorbed his mind.—ED.
>
> "The reader of the holy records of inspiration will perceive that a race, male and female, linked by a subtle gradation, had been created before the Unity was placed in the chosen vale watered by the four rivers, with the fruit of prohibition growing in the centre. This garden was a pattern as it were of the bowers of the invisible world, out of which appeared the Originator and his many agents talking with the new creature, who being a unit as to external, though double in his internal nature, was made ruler over all the inferior races, which being male and female were nearer to the material, and lower in their spiritual perceptions. With Adam, therefore, God and the Angels might hold companionship, and to him were intrusted the oracles which revealed more clearly the Unseen. He was the medium between the spiritual and material world—the founder of that which, in his fall, (the fall being covetousness or desire, a wish to become two, whereas he was one,) constituted the church, and preserved the traditions of Angelic

correspondence. Ever since his descendants have yearned in prophecy for the second Adam, who should restore that which was lost in the first; hence the conception of Mary was miraculous—the spiritual once more blent with the material—and Christ walked the earth a unit as did the first Adam before he longed for material companionship, and forced the Almighty to reverse in sorrow that which he had pronounced "good," and say, "it is not good for man to be alone." The Savior was one in this—that sex was annihilate in the internal of his nature, and hence he taught, that love restores the state of Paradise, when pure and holy; a divine love even may exist, by which two become one as are the Angels of· God. "They are no longer twain." "Whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder;" the true marriage being of the spirit removes the curse of loneliness consequent upon the fall. Benevolence, sympathy, affinities irrespective of the material, alone do this. Then arises the fearful suggestion of Jesus in the saying, "they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead;" which is full of singular thought. Are there sins connected with ill-assorted bonds, which tend to annihilation-states arising from the relation of the sexes, which make us worthy of the resurrection, or plunge us into a state of materialism deathful to the spirit?

This view may suggest a reason why souls or ghosts are not visible—If worthy of the resurrection, it is intimated they are incomplete till he, or she, who hath removed the curse of loneliness, is incorporated with the risen portion.—E. H.

but little lower than the angels, talked familiarly with spirits whose station was fast by the throne of the Eternal. Then I talked with this creature of nobleness, who questioned us like a little child, and we loved him for his limitedness, and delighted to teach him."

"Thou!" said Mary—"thou!" and she shrank aside.

The youth bowed his head painfully, and was silent for many moments, for an intense loneliness grew upon him.

"Dost thou know the angel-nature? two incorporate in one—think in holy and sublime reverence of that great eternal Being, who alone is composed of those triple elements, out of which proceed the whole universe of God." Again he was silent, wrapt in adoration, and Mary lifted her head upward, understanding less, yet adoring as she best knew.

"At length the man wearied of his nature so like unto the angels, and yet inferior to them in knowledge; and he cast his eyes outward, seeking for external companionship—longing for affinities—and then it was that the heaviness of the material grew upon him: the spiritual slept, and man sank prostrate to the earth—with which his nature had begun to mix from the time that he ceased to look upward unto God."

"Was he alone?" asked Mary.

"Not alone—he dwelt in a sublime unity, as do the Angels."

"I do not understand thee—let it pass—I am content to wait God's own revealments as to mysteries."

"It is given thee to know," resumed the youth. "He was not alone in the completeness of his nature, but his yearning for material companionship was to bring upon him its own terrible penalty. He slept; the pale stars trembled above him; the moon looked whitely downward; and we, the angels of God, clustered around his bower, and looked sorrowfully upon this beautiful and perfect child-questioner, whose nature so loved to penetrate the eternal, and to whom it had been given to learn, not to know—and thence he was a being of perpetual wonder, and perpetual delight.

He slept—we knew that he would awake, but we trembled for the consequences of his sin. While we looked on, marking the freedom and nobleness of the man with his clustering locks and veiled eyes, forth from his side arose a creature the counterpart of himself, softened, beautified, more lovely than he, whose long locks. and upturned eyes wove a net of enchantment about her form. The man smiled and spread forth his arms, but she turned aside, and cast her eyes around and above, as yet unknowing where she should rest.

The angels of God departed, bearing the tale to the throne of the Almighty, but I lingered by, for I loved the man, and felt that he had brought a great grief upon himself. He had pined· for one to walk side by side with himself in the material, and thus his nature had been dissevered. He slept; and woman arose from his side, and now for ever and for ever should he pine with a loneliness and yearning for his dissevered self. Seeking for ever for her love—doubtful—uncertain—she clinging to his side, longing to be restored to her primal station, yet plunged in the darkness which he had created, loving blindly, meekly, and sadly, and turning at length to God in the hopelessness of her human quest for the lost home of Paradise.

Oh! the dreary solitude which grew on man's heart as he went forth seeking the lost—when found he was still in doubt, for the veil of the material shadowed the loveliness of the spiritual and neither could discern its mate clearly, but as through a glass darkly; and thus have they wandered, perplexed and sorrowful, he bowed by labor and seized with a wild tyrannic love reversing the doom of the Almighty; and she patient,

submissive, crushed by human oppression, and the far more terrible curse of her affections.

"Why should the curse rest upon the sinless?" asked Mary. "Had she not sinned?"

"The part must bear the penalty of the whole," resumed the youth. "It is the dissevered man that for ever pines, and struggles, and seeks; and dies in doubt and blindness and weariness of heart."

"And what didst thou do, after this great change?" asked the child.

"Years are but days to us," replied the youth. The harmonies of a most lovely world had been destroyed—the master of the material had sunk himself to the grosser elements, and the good struggled feebly to the light. The spiritual was more and more sliding from the earth, and the angels of God, who had so loved man in his perfect state, grew fearful that the blackness of the external world would plunge him, and all like unto him, into the darkness and downwardness of creatures who have no semblance to God in their internal forms."

The youth was silent, and sat long as if struggling with thoughts that shook him to the soul, and to which words gave no significancy. At length, he said:

"I will not tell thee how the sons of. God deplored this state of things. We were of that subtle element which is flame—burning and glowing with intense love—nearest to God—loving most his works—analyzing best the wonders and the beauties of his creation—for the element of which we were composed enters most into the loveliest emanations of the Almighty. I must not speak the names of those who offered themselves as Redeemers of this fair world—how they left the throne of the Eternal—what. shapes they took—nor how they fell."

Again he was silent—Mary gathered her arms close to her breast, and a strange terror chased the blood from her cheek, and caused her to tremble exceedingly. The youth went on:

"Some are slowly making their way upward to God, for love will redeem the faithful—but others have gone out for ever—lost harmonies in the universe of God—and the sorrow of those who are left is found in those highest strains of melody, which have alway a cadence of grief, delight and beauty touching the verge of pain—the sublimest utterance because it is the voice of love pleading for the lost, and fleeing to its fountain—which is God. The names of these are sealed for ever, no more to be heard in the great universe;—there was a time when mine rushed to annihilation—but I clung in blindness and despair to the last point of an exceeding love, and escaped through the terrible gate of fire. Then thy blessed mother came forth with crystal water, a pure heart, and love beyond that of woman, and I escaped the shape of the material of flame, which men saw in the furnace, and became a human form.

"For ages and ages had I watched the culminations and conjunctions of suns and stars*

* We find the following curious legend copied in the hand writing of Helfenstein, which we subjoin as throwing some light upon the nature of studies which beguiled the solitariness of his life.

THE ELIXIR VITAE.

"The greatest defenders of Astrology do agree among themselves, that it cannot reach so far as to foretell a thousand peculiar circumstances, which depend purely upon the freedom of men."'—NOSTRODAMUS, 1549.

BLACK-LETTER EXTRACT.

I suppose that when ye loyal and true followers of my Lord of Sefton range themselves under his goodly banner, they verie imperfectly understand the meaning of the words printed in golden letters upon ye flaunting ensign which they follow unto ye death. How should they, never having been taught the secrets of the scribe, which indeed is in no way to be regretted, since men need small learning, their business being to serve God and to obey their rulers? Even the Gentlemen pertaining to my Lord content themselves with a copy of their sword haft in lieu of writing their name, being in fact unable to do more, from the ·nature of their early training, by which they were confined to ye pleasant recreations of hawk and hound, together with passages of arms, all of which are best befitting a Gentleman.

But to the motto of my Lord of Sefton, of which it behoveth me to speak. Most of men who are able to make out this motto, believe ye words,—"Vivere sat Vincere," to conquer is to live enough, which is the plain meaning, but not the spirit of the thing, refereth simply to the brave man who feeleth that to have borne his banner safely through the hottest of battle, to have conquered with that uppermost in the fight, is to have lived long enough; or victory is cheaply earned by his deathe.

This was my own opinion, till a right pleasant missive from the renowned Nostrodamus, who had heard somewhat of ye labors of a western Philosopher, (of whose merits it would not become me to speak,) informed me that the motto of my Lord of Sefton was not in truth a battle cry, but had other and far different signification; more than this he said, which it would be disloyal for me to repeat as coming from so great a man.

Accordingly I set on foote such inquiries as the case would seem to justify, the result of which filled me with a great and exceeding joy; as proving that that which hath been so faithfully believed is not an idle fantasy, but a hidden truth of the Great God; into which the devout mind is sometimes permitted to looke. I took a long and perilous journey to visit the castle of my Lord of Sefton, in which I suffered diverse hardships and was often time in wonderful and great perile, as well from the rudeness of the people as the exceeding number and boldness of ye wolves that do infeste that region. I there saw that high round tower of which Nostrodamus made mention, did penetrate into ye same; but, more of this anon. I will now recorde the historie I gathered of this great family, ye which I pray God to keep in all prosperitie, for indeed they are right worthy; and here let me remark that the aspect of the heavens doth indicate uncommon power and an exaltation of fate which it might be unseemly for me to foretell.

It is now little more than an hundred years since the Lord of Sefton, his sovereigne being at peace, and he living in amitie with the Barons of the neighborhood, found himself content to unbrace the sword from his thighe and devote himself to those studies so much affected by good and devout men. Now this Lord of Sefton had one daughter of such marvellous beauty, that Knights and gallants in great numbers thronged the Castle to look upon the fair face and flowing locks of Blanch of Sefton. Whereat my Lord grew bothe angrie and troubled, not knowing how it would ende.

Such had been his love for this, his only childe, that from the first he had not dared to cast her horoscope, thinking assuredlie that the promise of any evil to her would be the death of himself. It came to pass, however, that the fairness of the maiden, which at first had been so pleasing, to him became a great source of careful foreboding, and having turned the matter over in his minde, he come at length to resolve to cast her horoscope.

Greate was his perplexitie at the result,—greate indeed—for the figure not onlie did indicate uncommon beautie and dignitie from the exaltation of bothe Venus and Jupiter. but the trine aspect of certaine planets did show unabated felicity and perfect health after the period of seven years from birth. In sooth, there was no detriment to her whatever. But the greatest of all wonders did seem to be that she should not die.

Now Blanch showed uncommon aptitude for all abstruse and mystical studies, and after this event my Lord tooke her into his laboratory and there taught her all the mysteries of the divine Art. He withheld from her the knowledge of the exact period of her birth lest she should cast her own nativitie and thus see the wondrousness of her fate. But Blanch, by the lines upon her own fair hand, by certaine moles, to be found upon her comlie bodie, by her dreams, by the love she bore the Rose and the Lily, the dove and the eagle; and the disguste which she felt at the presence of rats, cats and other vermin, as well as the pleasure she felt in view of the faithfulness of the dogge and the nobleness of all kingly beasts, did construct a figure by which she reached to the very secret her father most wished to conceale.

Whereat he was greatlie surprised, and thenceforward hid nothing from her. Meanwhile Blanch treated her many lovers with such sweet grace, giving favor to none, that each one found himself loving none the less, yet without any hope of winning ye damsel. Now it did so happen that one night there came to the Castle of my Lord of Sefton a comely youth bearing rare figures, which he had brought from the Orient, having traveled quite through Germanie and France, and communed with the most learned men of those Kingdoms. He did relate that he had followed the leading of a star, which pointed to the Occident as the spot where he should realize that for which the wise and the learned had been so long seeking, even the “Elixir Vitae.”

The round tower of which I have before spoken, became the place for the trial of skill and science, which tower was even then, as now, covered at the top with goodlie sized trees, and the time of the building of which had faded out of the minds of men. I myself found the secret entrance, and did penetrate into a small but marvelously constructed room, octagonal in its shape, and concealing that of which I shall hereafter speak. I am fully of opinion that the Phoenicians have landed upon this island, and these towers are their work, built for defence and the pursuit of those occult sciences, which are too deep and too sacred for the vulgar mind to penetrate, and in which this people were most learned.

One morning the Lord of Sefton was seen to emerge from the tower, bearing in his hand an azure banner covered with stars, and, in golden letters, the motto—Vivere sat Vincere. His face was if it did reflect the sun, and his eyes of such rare brightness that men feared to look upon him. Then the Lords and Gentlemen began to look for Blanch and the stranger youth, who could nowhere be found.

Suspecting some foul wrong, from the appearance of my Lord of Sefton, who could give them no tidings of either, and looking upon the divine Art of Astrology as a devisement of Satan, they dealt so hardly· with the old Lord that he died that night.

In greate fear and shame at what they had done, the gallants fled from the Castle, since which time the fair banner of the ill-fated Lord hath been borne to many and great victories, and maney more await it, and the motto is now retained on the escutcheon of the family in place of the former—[here the book is defective with age, and we cannot make out the more ancient motto.]

Since that period I suppose no one has ever entered the round tower but the writer hereof, who reached the spot at the time that Mercury, the prognosticator of jurnies, was in the very aspect of success. The learned will understand the process by which I detected the presence of the hidden vault, and concealed treasures, which I left untouched as I found them, being in sooth the guerdon of the Sefton house at such time as the period of their burial shall have ·expired. I did indeed see marvelous things which it is unlawful for me to tell, but a portion whereof I shall here relate as a guide to those who shall come. after me, to whom it is given when the sun shall be in Leo, and certain stars of the fiery triplicity—(I speak to the learned)—in certaine aspects, to enter, as through an open doore, and reade the writing upon the wall, even as it were words spoken by human lips. Such also shall open the greate sealed books of Egypte, the writings hidden in caves upon walls and the posts of the doors and the pillars thereof. *

> * This curious passage might seem to point out the key discovered by the French savans to the hieroglyphics of Egypt, many of which are said to be Astrologic in their import.

I did read marvelous inscriptions upon a faire tablet, by which I learned that the oriental youth and Blanch were each born under such rare influences, that the mystic affinities thus produced were stronger even than ye barriers of space, and ye impedes bothe by land and sea; being in truth next to the divine essence, from such of whom there is nothing hidden, as saith the sacred word. It is not possible that such births should take place oftener than once in five or seven hundred years, from which cause all appertaining to them hath such a strange and improbable a face, that people think they do well to eschew the marvels all together.

It doth appear that the Elixir Vitae hath been more than once discovered, as the tablet did show forth; and also it doth darkly prefigure an exceeding good to the possession of which the human race shall yet attain, when ye system to which we belong shall have advanced to an opening in ye constellation of Hercules, of which I may not now speak; but at which time, this, which is now prophecy, shall become a fact, and the Elixir Vitae be distilled by the devout Alchymist under the benign influence of stars, so aspecting that they shall spell clearly in ye heavens the divine word, Love, and the believing shall drink thereof and live.

In the centre of the room I did find a small hole, of the size it may be of a bull's eye, by means of which, looking steadfastly downward, there appeared a golden lamp burning, which is one of those kindled by occult means, of which Plinie and others have made mention. The which I looked upon reverently, not attempting with profane curiosity to reach, but leaving it to burn till Jupiter shall have been—[copy imperfect] times within three degrees of Aldobaron, in Taurus, at which time the hidden door will of itself open: whosoever shall pry therein till such time, shall find himself in darkness, and the heaps of gold and gems which are there piled, within the light of the burning lamp, will be resolved into their original baseness of iron, and coal, and clay.

When I did relate how I reverently spared the lamp and all within that tower, to Nostrodamus, he did commend my pietie, declaring that he well believed me destined to produce the great secret of our Art, even the Philosopher's stone, and inciting me to prayer and great diligence, of which things I will not now speak, but, God willing, hereafter more may come of it. I am persuaded that none of these things are vouchsafed to any but to such who, living in favorable times, also keep the gift of God.

I did not see the youth and the maiden who drank of the Elixir Vita, but I am persuaded they are now living in some lovely and enchanting isle, hidden in the blueness of the sea, having never tasted death nor known evil; and I dare not say whether children are born unto them, for this is a mysterie. One thing I did behold, and the sight thereof was as the joy of a fair river, whereon no storm nor shipwreck cometh.

The walls of the room were of pearl, as it were sheets of rose fading into white, and here I beheld the pictures of two beings in the flush of their youth standing hand in hand, with a faire smile upon their lips. Whereat I gazed long with an exceeding pleasure. These pictures were as if the parts themselves had been laid upon the pearl, the blue veins being upon the temples and the streaks around the pupil of the eye, even as if the life were there. The threads of hair were like beams of light, and the curling beard of the youth long and it was darker than the hair parted upon his brow. I made no doubt these were Blanch and her Lover, the more when I saw above their heads the motto—"Vivere sat Vincere."

favorable to the birth of a creature of such rare goodness as she, thy angel mother—how did I tremble, and sink with annihilate dread lest the earth should fulfill her time, and I unredeemed. Oh! the temptations that beset, the darkness that involved, and the peril and dismay from deadly conflict with those malevolent spirits who delight in torture, and whose doom is despair. How the shapes of these lost but not annihilate ones thronged in my path crowding into infinite space, and I was compelled to walk over, disarm and conquer them, or sink to a doom too terrible for utterance. Look yonder at the north, where the lightnings flash in lurid streaks, but the thunders are dumbed in space. There, there, are the lost spirits in mighty conflict, and thus have I fought pierced by wounds such as only those of an intangible and subtle essence can know.

"At length the period approached—I stood with the torn habiliments of an exiled and struggling archangel, shrinking, scorched, and writhing with anguish, and thus passed the gate of fire. Let me forget the torture —terrible as it was; for less terrible was it than the fear, that spirits, potent in evil, should find me in my hour of weakness, unshielded, stripped, and powerless, and bind me for ever to the loathsome material form of flame. But the Great and Merciful Infinite forbade this doom, and the water of life fell upon me, and the utterance of blessing. and thus I became a little child; yet with my ancient knowledge and power unreclaimed by the Infinite.

"Then, Mary, with my human form came the blindness of human love. Thou didst seem twin-soul of mine, and I resolved to keep thee to myself—thou shouldst pass the earthly trial unstained from the world. I sealed thine eyes in slumber, and kept thee all, all mine—thou shouldst have passed onward thus, alas! that it was selfishness and sin—I could not let thee go. How beautiful was my vision of a creature of earth pure as the dreams of angels—unscathed by human grief, unstained by human emotion. Oh! Mary, Mary, thou wert all mine—ages and ages I would have kept thee thus—communing with thy soul—caressing, loving, adoring thee, and thou all mine—content, joyous even; sealed from sin, and blending into the nature of an archangel, so that our companionship was such as wrapt, entranced, and filled me with ecstasy."

Mary clasped her hands: "Why didst thou awake me? Ah! I remember all, all. Let me sleep once more. Angel—Demon—whatsoever thou art, let me be thine."

A sharp flash of lightning blasted a tree at their very feet, and Mary clung to the neck of the youth.

"Most Merciful—let the sin be mine, not hers," cried he, fervently clasping his hands, and he put the form of the girl gently aside.

"Mary, blaspheme not, I beseech thee—I waked thee because the Infinite opened my eyes to see that I was guilty of a new crime. I was rushing once more to annihilation, as others had done before, who could not withstand the ordeal of the senses. The grief of thy father, and a gleam of thy angel-mother floating in her beatitude passed me by; I saw her calm reproach, I was humbled to the dust, but even then my struggles all night with the anguish of my soul, wrought fearfully in the glen. I gave thee to the arms of thy father and went forth, nor dared to look upon thy growing beauty, till my hour of weakness again came upon me, and I returned to find thee thus."

"Alas! and may I not? Is it forbidden to love thee?" said the girl tenderly.

The youth pointed his finger to the side of the mountain and said, "Look, Mary, wouldst thou have me one of those?"

She turned her eyes in the direction, and the filmy wings of an enormous earth-spirit lifted themselves upward; the jeweled scales of his breast gleamed in the moonshine, and the fiery eyes shot forth intense flames from beneath a burning crown.*

> * We find the following record of a dream, which from its singularity seems to have made some impression upon the mind of Helfenstein. Indeed, judging from this and other circumstances, we are convinced that the dreams of our friend would have quite put to shame the opium-produced marvels in this way of both Coleridge and De Quincey, which after all are not of any value as psychological phenomena, from the fact that they were produced by stimulants, and were therefore a partial congestion of the brain; whereas those of Helfenstein were the natural product of an organization incapable of tolerating any stimulant stronger than black tea. It is true, in the case of those remarkable men there must have been wonderful compass of brain, which the stimulant put into action; this becomes obvious when we compare it with the beautiful, but more limited construction of Lamb, whose quaint but honest admission, "I am ashamed of the poverty of my dreams," brings the man so very near to the common heart. But to the dream, which from date we find occurred but a few months prior to the death of our friend.
>
> A Dream.—Sept. 18—. 18—.
>
> I thought I had passed without pain the portals of the grave—I stood in a gray, not blue atmosphere, which extended above, below, and upon every side of me: I looked upward, downward, to the right and the left, where it extended into limitless space, the which my eyes penetrated with a continually growing power of vision, till they ached at the immensity and the solitude. There was neither sun, nor star, nor shape of any kind. An intense loneliness made me shudder and cling my arms to my breast, as if in the communings of my own soul companionship would arise. At length a shield, light and translucent, was put into my hands, and a voice said, but still I saw

no one—"Guard thyself with this, and whatsoever thou canst not walk over and subdue is thy companion, and kindred with thee."

Then meseemed I went on, covered only with this shield, which was without weight and most beautiful. Oh! the inexpressible rapture there was in motion. Now I trod proudly and buoyantly forward, with a sense of power and a sense of delight, which no language can paint. Anon I leaned upon space, and floated, as if every limb and fibre were exultant with motion. Then I recalled past dreams and said to myself aloud, and my voice was a new source of pleasure—"When I was in the material world, I used often to dream that angels and spirits had no wings, and now I find it true—and I am so glad—it is so much nobler, so much more beautiful and free, to move by the force of the will only."

Thus I went onward folding my arms, and the way brightening before me, though I saw nothing from which the light proceeded. At length I was conscious of a sharp pang, as if innumerable stings had penetrated every fibre; I bethought myself of my shield and spread it before me, for the light had grown to a purple redness, and right under my feet I saw a creature who seemed one mass of flame, a burning coal as it were, huge, and darting spears of heat upon every side. I said, "Surely I have nothing akin to this loathsome shape," and I walked, not without pain, over his prostrate form.

Then I went onward again, encountering five others, each more terrible in shape and aspect, and each more erect, but I observed the light was growing constantly more intense—less burning, but yet more penetrating, and causing sufferings akin to that which we feel at the sudden obtrusion of some painful thought. I walked over each and all, writhing and suffering it is true, yet confident of success, and constantly saying—"I have nothing akin to these."

At length the light, which had been growing whiter all the time, became diffused in such clear brightness, upon every side, that I felt it not in my eyes alone, but as if it were a part of myself—as if I were shaped out of it—were all eye, and all life and light, and moved still companionless, but not without joy. I said to myself—"People in the other world know little of this—that we are to test what manner of spirit we are of, by combat with spiritualisms." Suddenly I felt as if the light in which I moved were crystalized into the form of swords, and I cast my shield upon every side to save myself from wounds too terrible for endurance: even in my anguish I cast about in my mind for something analogous in the world which I had left to the sense of torture I endured now, and I said:

"Oh! I remember, in the other world mischievous boys in the streets would sometimes throw the light from a mirror suddenly into our rooms, and we recoiled from the pang, and now it is as if that ray were hardened to a sword, and become what in our Scriptures is described as the "sword of the Lord," and I repeated with painful distinctness—"For the word of the Lord is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." I still went onward, and there in my path lay, or rather up rose a being more terrible than any I had hitherto seen, in shape not unlike a dragon, with innumerable heads; human they seemed, each crowned, and each full of power and beauty. The creature's arms were myriads; his shape, convolved ·and towering, filled a vast space, and every hand was armed with one of those subtle swords framed out of light. I grew faint with pain and terror, yet determined to advance, for I said, "I am not akin to this." I plunged into the midst of these thousand swords, bewildered by the glare of jewels, and the piercing beams of myriads of eyes. I held my shield upon every side. I pressed onward, saying to myself—"I must not stay with these," and suffering with the sharp cuts of wounds inflicted upon every limb, and saying, "Oh! how much more terrible than the wounds from which we used to shrink in the other world!" Then I tried to think where I had read something analogous, and the great Milton's fight of Michael and Satan recurred to my memory; I awoke repeating that wonderful passage, and assenting with terrible vividness to the accuracy with which he had described the agony of spiritual wounds.

The clock struck one just as the vision departed, and for many moments after I opened my eyes I was flooded with light but nothing visible, and then it passed away, leaving the night intensely dark.—E.H.

Mary shuddered. "Nay, God forbid, and shield thee from these—Forgive me; I am but human."

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

THE FIRE FLY—THE WORD FORGIVE—A NEW HARMONY IN SPACE—KNOWLEDGE DERIVED FROM FALLEN SPIRITS—A NEW MISSION—LOVE MUST BE THE FOUNDATION OF MINISTRY, NOT POWER—THE VEILED ANGEL—A DREAM.

The stranger was awhile silent, and Mary watched the fireflies as they darted here and there, and now she saw that they hovered near the earth—their gleams were bright but fitful, and she knew they were the fading glories of beings once great in power, but now dwindling into darkness and eternal death. She looked with painful pity upon these, for a deep mystery she saw pervaded all things; then the stranger at length answered:

"Forgive thee, Mary? Ah! thou canst not know, thou limited in knowledge, what it is to forgive. Thou canst not know how one solitary evil disturbs the whole harmony of the universe, and how the Infinite alone can restore all things to order. The child-word, forgive, is beautiful from mortal lips, and touches even angelic hearts, for we know that did they know all, all that we know, a ghostly terror would grow upon them, and they would perish in silence. Therefore is the cry "Forgive," "Be pitiful," a new tone to the eternal harp, whose chords vibrate through unfettered space, and we hear and rejoice. Gentle Mary, touch not the chord to me, lest I sin anew."

"Teach me silence; teach me to bless thee only, beautiful one," cried Mary, fervently.

"We will talk of my mission, Mary, for indeed this converse is not well."

Mary held back the beatings of her heart, and asked faintly, without raising her eyes to the face of the youth:

"Didst thou too come to redeem the world, and fall?" "I am one of those," he replied; "I did not leave the dissevered man—I did not desert him in his blindness and grief. The Eternal saw that an exceeding love prompted my stay, and He, who had again and again said to spirits that longed to restore man to his former blessedness, "Go," witnessed the meekness yet fervor of my devotion to human good with a smile, and I was content.

"Ages rolled away—fair cities grew upon the earth, and evils accumulated, for a strange mysterious knowledge borrowed from angels,*

> * "I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places."—ISAIAH.

who in their fall still held the seals of a former power, mingled with the needful and innocent wisdom natural to man. The race was merging itself into this fearful companionship, and losing the traditions of the communings of Eden. I saw that these evils must increase, and trembled for the issue. Again another spirit stood before the Almighty, burning to restore the lost and the beautiful. It was I, and the voice said, 'Go.'

"I became human in my form, yet not in substance; not as now, Mary, which is still a pre-existent mystery not to be explained even to thee—a shadowy outline of the human in its noblest form, and alas! there was pride even in this—but let it pass. I told thee I was of the element of fire. I touched the earth, and gems the rarest, and beauty that bewilders, and power that intoxicates, filled me with dreams such as I had never before known. The world was at my feet, with its deluding adoration; men hailed me as a minister of good—and good was done. I lightened human bonds. I gave new impulse to thought—to aspiration. I revealed anew the lost lights of the struggling understanding; re-taught the doctrines of Eden, the deep and true and beautiful wisdom of God, and his untold mysteries. I thought all was well, for I contemned human sympathy, and turned from the blandishments of woman; but a messenger of the Almighty bade me lay aside the sceptre of power, and go forth to bind up the wounds of the dying—speak lovingly words of comfort to the wayside beggar—bade me look upon man, not as a mass over whom the sceptre of power was to be swayed, but as one suffering, forlorn human creature with a blind and broken heart, into which light might be poured and the oil of comfort.

"I turned aside with disgust. The spirit covered his wings over the lustre of his eyes, from which beamed the hidden reflection of God's throne, and said, 'Think again, for thou art greatly beloved.'

"The wayside leper—the sickly and loathsome maniac—the guilty and miserable bent their eyes upon me, and I revolted at the sight. The messenger led me to a covert for herds, where slept a child amid the food of cattle— 'Behold the Redeemer,' he said.

"The sceptre had departed from me—the power of the archangel was no more. I was a wayside wanderer—deathless—yet exiled from my seat by the throne of God. I had failed in my mission, beguiled by the lust of power, and now I watched the course of the Child of Bethlehem."

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION ACHIEVED THROUGH ENTIRE SYMPATHY WITH ITS OBJECT—THE LOST ANGEL SEEKS THE NAZARENE—REDEEMED NOT BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS, BUT BY LOVE AND OBEDIENCE—SIGNS OF A LOST SOUL—THE WRATH OF HUGO—THEY BEAR THE STRANGER TO THE FURNACE—HE IS SAVED.

"MARY, take the blessed mystery of redemption home reverently to thy heart, and question not too much. See in it God's will and way—believe and love. I saw the simple majesty which invested the new mission—saw how the child Jesus grew into manhood, in the world, and yet not of it. Always waiting God's time, I, who had covered myself with all the glory of earth, beheld the man of Nazareth casting all aside hungry and athirst, weary and sorrowful—homeless and companionless, for human sympathy touched but the outskirts of his great and full nature—he moved wherever sorrow and suffering and hunger and disease came, and comfort and divine joy, and bread and health emanated from him, gladdening the multitudes of the stricken in heart or life.

"Mary, I sought his aid—she bade me to love and to obey—he spake the accents of comfort and hope, 'watch and pray' were his last words. Then came his own great hour of trial—perfect through suffering faithful unto death. I saw it all—and for ages have waited in the hope that a trial even like unto that might be mine. But the mission of Jesus was accomplished through a perfect human heart, and from the lowliness of this I had recoiled. I must pass the terrible gate of fire, and become a little child. Then the blessed water of baptism was denied, for other trials awaited me, and I must be redeemed not by the blood of Jesus, but through obedience, and that love which had induced me to come into the world for human good."

He was silent, and Mary looked upon him with reverence not unmingled with tenderness, as she said:

"Didst thou fail altogether? surely thy desire should bring thee some good."

"Nay, there was presumption in my love; I failed in that, self was not annihilate in the sacredness of my mission. The good I would have done for man was taken from me, because I did it not through a great and overwhelming sympathy for his trials, his toils and temptations, but as a patron and lawgiver. It was not the solitary and struggling heart, weak and dark, but the great mass that I would redeem—not the ***** rill silent and bitter and feeble, but the ocean of bitterness, and I should be hailed as the benefactor. Alas! the ignominy and agony of one heart tilled me with horror and disgust. I could not make myself, pure as I was within, seem to the world without, viler than the vilest. I could not suffer reproach and shame, because such was a part of humanity. I with ***** a soul revolting at evil, and thus was my love for man imperfect in its nature, and I failed. Now I struggle upward, claiming no reward, but hoping in the mercy of the Highest. The Child Jesus alone was able to know within himself every pang that belongs to humanity, know it through the greatness of his sympathy with him whom he came to redeem, and yet be unspotted from the world."

"God forbid! that I should be a hinderance to thee in thy upward course," ejaculated Mary, fervently.

"Then, indeed my last trial is over," returned the youth, and lifting his eyes upward, he said, "And now, Oh! thou Infinite and Eternal! I come to thee. Wildly and proudly did I blend myself with the material, but Oh! my God! have I not escaped the great snare of the senses? shall I not from henceforth begin to ascend to those heights of purity for which I burn and consume night and day?"

"Alas! alas," said the child once more oppressed by the tenderness of her human heart,

"How lonely I shall be when thou art gone!" Stung as if by a secret pang, he recoiled from her side, and then he took her hand in his—their eyes met—a meteor shot across the sky, casting a lurid light upon their faces, and a tree fell in the silence of the night, causing the ancient woods to resound with unwonted echoes—the youth dropped her hand and covered his face.

"Signs ***** of a lost soul." he murmured; "deliver thou me, Oh! God;" and he arose to his feet, but his steps were faint and his brow flushed.

At this moment the murmur of voices broke from the glen—torches were waved to and fro, and the trampling of feet approaching the place where stood Mary and the youth. Above the confusion of tongues arose the voice of the stout Hugo:

"He shall feel the hottest flame of the furnace," he cried.

The youth drew his sword, but again it rang in the scabbard and he stepped boldly forward—what he said in his clear calm tones was lost in the clanging shouts of Hugo.

"Here he is, seize him—plunge the false-hearted craven into the hottest flame."

"He is neither," cried Mary, flinging herself into the arms of her father—but Hugo cast her fiercely off, and she would have fallen to the earth had not the good Ralph caught her in his arms.

"Save him; Oh! save him, Ralph," besought Mary struggling to her feet.

But Ralph moved not.

"Go, go, I beseech thee, good Ralph, take him out of the hands of those terrible men;" and she tried to rush forward, but Ralph held her back, with his large horny hands, and said,

"Nay, let him die."

It was terrible, the tumult of voices through the stillness of night. The men crowded through the narrow glen, bearing the youth forward with shouts and curses. As they entered the valley, the light from the moon above was pale upon their uncovered heads, while the flame of the furnace lighted their red and bronzed faces to a wild unearthly lustre, and their brawny arms gleamed here and there like the contortions of innumerable serpents. In the midst they bore the youth, who only ejaculated, "Ye know not what ye do; ye are God's instruments."

As the fierce heat of the furnace fell upon his head, he shuddered and lifted up his eyes and hands in meek supplication:

"Oh, God! have I not passed the terrible gate of fire? If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

The men drew back, for the youth slipped from their hold, even when they were plunging his body into the jaws of the flame. Enlarged and radiant he stood before the burning arch, glowing with beauty, and floating in an atmosphere of pearly hue, into which he melted, and the men stood with upturned and wondering eyes, while a voice said, "Blessed are the Redeemed. The last exile has passed the gate of fire."

"Shall we meet again?" thought Mary, as she witnessed these things, and something said in her own heart:

"Leave it to God. Thou art the seal of his mission."

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

MARGERY COMFORTS THE CHILD—RASH WORDS OF HUGO—THE FILIAL PIETY OF MARY—THE MAN OF IRON BECOMES HELPLESS AS A LITTLE CHILD—CHRISTMAS HYMNS—ANOTHER SONG OF REDEMPTION.

Dame Margery took the child to her heart, and uttered a benediction over her, for she knew the goodness of Mary, and when she saw Ralph frown, and shrug his shoulders, she retorted:

"Shame upon thy evil suspicious thoughts, Ralph! The Lord be praised that I am childless, if hearts like these fill the world."

Mary cast herself at the feet of Hugo, but he spurned her aside with his heavy foot, and bending over her, said, "Let me never see thy face again."

Mary entered her bower, weeping bitterly, and all that Dame Margery could say brought no comfort. The morning came, and the day waned, and yet she came not forth, nor lifted up her head for sighs and tears. The wind swept the vines of the lattice, the birds sang upon the sill, but she was stricken of heart, and alone. The clankings and roarings of the furnace mingled with the many voices of labor, but the bluff, loud tones of Hugo were unheard. At length Mary wondered that she did not hear his voice, and she went in search of Margery.

On her way she encountered her father groping along the wall.

"Who goes there?" he shouted; "the night is blacker than the darkness of Egypt—tell me if it is not time for day."

Mary checked the words upon her tongue, and looked into his eyes. He was blind. Wringing her hands she sank down at his feet. Hugo moved not, but he knew the voice of his daughter, and he cried, "Out of my sight—let me not see thee."

"Oh! my father, thou art blind," cried the child.

"Blind—blind—open the windows—I shall suffocate. Give me room. Take me from this pit of darkness."

He would have fallen, but Margery placed the big arm-chair behind him, and the large, stern man sat with clenched hands and foot forward, and his eyes staring as if to escape from the blackness that surrounded him.

Mary dared not touch him, but she knelt down with her hands over her eyes, bent to the earth, and Dame Margery looked on with prayers and ejaculations of grief.

Days and weeks moved on; not a word escaped the lips of Hugo. He sat stern and motionless, waving all aside with his heavy arm; and when words were uttered in his

presence a stamp of his foot brought silence. His brow was rigidly contracted, his limbs nerved, his lips compressed. The hair of his head grew white as snow, and fell in thick folds upon his shoulders, and his beard waved upon his breast. The few words which he spoke, were unwillingly uttered, and Dame Margery, even, dared not question him.

Mary was ever at his side—she combed his long white locks, she bathed his temples and feet, she held the food to his lips, and then knelt in prayer to the good Father, that he would comfort the comfortless. The winter came, and he had not stirred from the threshold. The trees of the glen were cased in a panoply of ice, which glinted in the frosty light, pure and sparkling. The little brook fretted itself through its frozen channel, every shrub upon its margin bent with a weight of translucent crystal—the wood robin, grown bold, came to the windows of the hamlet for crumbs of bread; and the erratic snow-bird careered amid the drifts of snow, as merrily as the stormy petrel upon the sea. Wreaths of smoke arose to the clear blue sky amid clusters of maple and elm, and the sparks of the furnace danced cheerily amid the sombre pines that crowned the sides of the mountains.

What passed in the mind of Hugo could not be known, silent and motionless as he was, and none dared to say it is the morning of the blessed Christmas. The pious Margery bound evergreens about the lattice, and prepared cheer for the whole hamlet, as had always been the wont of the household, and the good woman trembled to omit the old custom. So she and Ralph, and the good Dame Alice and Peter, made all things ready as in the days gone by, when the stout Hugo lorded in his own halls, and his people came to him as to a father.

The chimes of the little church rang out a sweetly solemn peal of rejoicing. “Glad tidings, glad tidings,” said the bells, and “glad tidings, glad tidings,” went up from the valley, and was echoed away from hill to hill, the clear ringing air seeming willing to carry the sound far and wide.

Then came the people forth from their houses singing in groups, and as they passed the lattice of Hugo, snatches of song mingled with the crackling of the great fire upon the hearth. Midway in the floor sat Hugo, erect and stern, while Margery, in decent cap and kirtle, stood uncertain whether to follow the promptings of the bell, or remain in her ministry to Hugo. Mary, pale and sedate, sat with pious book in hand, ready to anticipate her father’s slightest want, and Ralph leaned against the chimney, gazing sorrowfully upon the master.

> On the vine-clad hills of Judah
> Simple Shepherds watched by night,
>
> When the crystal gates of heaven
> Outward poured their song and light.
>
> Peace on earth, good will to men,
> Angels sang in chorus then.

As the first sound of gathering feet, and the cadence of voices came to the ear of Hugo, he raised his foot, but it fell silently to the floor, and his head sank upon his bosom.

Presently another group sang:

> Blessed babe of Bethlehem!
> Simplest child upon the knee!
> Way-worn outcast never found
> Lowlier bed, than thine for thee.
>
> Lowliest child, of meekest birth,
> Bringing peace, good will to earth.

Hugo lifted up his head to listen, and a group now stood beneath the lattice crowned with evergreen, and Mary’s sweet voice joined their song—

> Come, ye poor and broken-hearted,
> Come, ye wise men, and adore
> Cast your burdens at his footstool,
> Here is knowledge evermore.
>
> Sing glad tidings, raise the strain,
> Angels come to earth again.

Hugo spread forth his arms, and murmured,

“My child!” and Mary laid her head upon his bosom; the tears of father and child fell in silence. When the next group sang,

> Meekly now as meekest children,
> Helpless hands we lift to thee,
> Bending knees of adoration
> To this greatest mystery
>
> Though the songs of angels cease,
> We will hail thee,
> Prince of Peace,

the deep tones of Hugo blent with the ringing sweetness of Mary as they joined the song of the people of the glen.

Afterwards Mary remembered that the voice of her father ceased at the words,

"To this greatest mystery;"

and when he did not move, she lifted her head to look into his face. She beckoned Margery to observe the smile upon his lips, but the dame loosened the hold of the two hands and lifted Mary from his arms. The stout Hugo had died with the song of Redemption upon his lips.

THE END.