



UNREST AND CONTENT.

When the great sea roars, like a million lions,
With jaws wide open and lashing manes,
And flings itself in a terrible passion
Across the tide's long, reeking plains,
My soul leaps up in its clay-walled prison,
In a mad desire to be out and free;
To shake the earth with that terrible power,
And be one with the tempest that rocks the sea.

When the tide goes out, and the moon looks over
The far, blue, cloud-veiled mountain lines,
And the dusk is sweet, and the white and red clover
Like stars in the murmurous meadows shines;
When the waves creep back, like beasts that are conquered,
And the sea lies sobbing, her passion spent,
My soul rests, glad, in its wise, stern prison,
And sinks to sleep. Sweet, sweet is content.

How often you and I have heard gentlemen blandly and magnanimously remark that a woman looks more beautiful and more desirable when delicately preparing some dainty in the kitchen than when thrumming her guitar in the parlor. How shallow those men are, or else how shallow they consider us. Do we not know that they speak thus straight from the palate, and never from the eye or the heart? Once I had a sister-in-law who loved mince pies, but who detested the making and the baking of them; so she used to say to me, with the most soulful and lamblike expression in her eyes: "O, you do make the most delicious pies I ever ate. Now, I can't make them good for anything. And, beside"—here she would assume a positively envious expression—"you don't know how pretty you look with your sleeves turned up and your kitchen apron on and your hands fluttering over the flaky crust," and she would sigh until I fancied she was dying of envy. May I be forgiven, for I was very young, but I actually believed her. And the result was that she fairly reveled in mince pies of my making, and was on the high road to dyspepsia, when one day I overheard her telling a friend, with little hysterical shrieks of mirth, how she was flattering me, so she would not have to make the pastry. Well, that was ten years ago; and I would believe some things then with my eyes wide open that you could not get me to believe now with them shut—and one of them is that you or I look more desirable gowned in a work apron, with our cheeks burnt scarlet and blisters on our arms, than we do in cool, soft silks, smiling into somebody's eyes, in the parlor. If it be necessary for women to do their own work, I like to see them do it cheerfully and lightheartedly; if they can afford servants, I like to see them keep a steady hand and a calm eye on the work in the kitchen, but I do not wish to hear any man tell his wife that she looks better in the kitchen than she does in the parlor. That means simply that he appreciates her more as a cook than as a wife. So, dear, if your husband ever says that to you, smile at him like an angel and reply: "Yes, sweetheart; and I think you, too, would look more desirable and more manly carrying up coal, in a flannel shirt and blue overalls, than going to the opera in a dress suit and a white camellia." See how he relaxes that, dear.

If I were a world-famous artist and a king should say to me: "Paint me a picture that will live to the end of the world, and at which no eye can look without burning purer"—what do you think I would paint? Two peasants listening to the twilight bells across the fields? The ravishing beauty of a woman's form or face? A path of silver trembling across a midnight sea? A flame of crimson and purple in the western sky at sunset? The gold heart of a white flower, where the bees cling, sweet-drunk? A sunlit sea; a frozen wood; a dream of moonlight stealing over a bed of violets; the northern lights? Ah, no. I would paint for him—a home. Simple and small it might be, but I would paint flowers and vines about it; and about the doors and windows birds with such little, swelling throats you would think you heard the liquid notes that poured from them; and sunshine—O, I would make the walls yellow with the sun's gold; and within I would paint a young mother with Mary's soul in her eyes, and at her side, kneeling, a little child with uplifted face and trustful, unquestioning eyes, faltering

"Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name—"

And I would say to my king: "I have painted you that which will live to the end of the world, and at which no man can look without being better therefor; for one may weary of hearing the music of the softest bells, or of the perfume of the sweetest flower; the woman who is beautiful today may

be old and sad tomorrow; thrones may topple and fall; wars may run, red-handed, through our fair land; nations may sink into the dust; but as long as there is a woman with a little child left on this earth there will be a home."

A young wife, who had been deeply loved, died, leaving her three children to her husband's keeping. The husband was heart broken, and, soon, to drown his sorrow, plunged into all forms of dissipation, gradually leaving his children more and more to the care of others. The angel wife sat away at the golden gate of heaven and pleaded that she might go back to earth for one night only and be with the hearts she loved. So, at last, pitying her, he who sits always at the gate left it open; and straight she fled through and sunk down the heliotrope dusk to the earth. And she found the one she loved drunken of wine, with other kisses upon his lips and a stain of shame upon his brow; and her children were alone, neglected and crying. Looking up in that hour, he saw her standing white and cold beside him, and a great horror fell upon him. But she only said, with a passionate sob, "What have you done with my children?"—and went struggling back through the midnight to beat her lonely breast and her bleeding hands upon the gate of heaven. How often do you think our tender dead, who never change, come back, to find us changed and, with one terrible cry that our consciences catch and hear forever, go back again to that land where one day we will shrink from going for fear of those saddened eyes?

Two who had deeply loved came one day to part because of some trivial misunderstanding, and because each was too proud to say, "I am in fault; forgive me." So they stood with cold eyes but trembling hearts and looked at each other.

"Here is the—ring," she said, drawing it slowly from her finger.

He took it as slowly, turned it over and over, and, as she did not speak, flung it upon the glowing coals. She paled a little, but unclasped from her throat a tiny chain and gave it him with a shaking hand. It shared the same fate. Then they stood silent.

"I—I have given you nothing," at last she said, in a tone of dull regret; and he replied, his voice breaking with deep emotion:

"No; you have given me no ring, no petty bauble, it is true, which may be returned and flung to the flames; but you have given every thought for two years past to me; you have given me your eyes, your lips, your heart; you have given me to know that heaven still lives on earth to the man who is loved by a chaste woman. These I can not give back to you—"

Then, all in a moment, the heart tears leaped up to her eyes, and his words were silenced on her lips.

Once upon a time a man went to a certain judge and said he:

"Judge, I want a divorce from my wife, 'n' as I hain't no bible reasons, nur sech, fer gitt'n' it, I jist thought I'd come t' yuh kind o' quiet like 'n' git it without any fuss."

"Oh," said the judge, smiling affably; "and what charge do you bring against your wife, sir? Upon what complaint do you seek a divorce?"

"Why, judge," and he straightened up and spoke in an awe-struck tone, "my wife was th' meekes' sort of a gell yuh ever see, 'n' I 'lowed 's how we'd git along swim'n'; but, sir, 'f yuh'll b'lieve me, afore we'd ben married six months thet wom'n let out thet she hed opinyuns—yes, sir, actully hed opinyuns, same's I hed, only diffrunt—I may say mostly diffrunt. Now, thet won't do fer two people 'n th' same house, judge; so I jist made up my min' I wouldn't hev no wife what's got opinyuns."

"I see," said the judge, sympathetically; "it is a bad business, but I'm afraid I can not help you out."

Why should you carry white flowers to the house of death, save, indeed, it be a little child that has died? Is not death colder itself than any ice-flower and whiter than any snow? Why not bring crimson roses and pile them about those cheeks from which the roses have fled, that they may catch something of their old time glow? Why not lay claret carnations near those dear lips, and heap blood-red poppies in the cold hands and on the colder breast that they may at least seem to press a little warmth there? And about that brow, that was for so long a time the home of a tender soul, put white narcissus blooms with their hearts of gold; and cover over the slender body down to the quiet feet with the wild pink roses that she so loved. Do not let your last remembrance of her be of something all white, all cold, but let a little warmth go with her even into the grave.

They tell us that heaven lies beyond the skies only to persuade us to look upward; uplifting the eyes elevates the mind. So each time that we look up to the song-pierced, violet vault above us we are one step above the earthly things and one step nearer the heaven that is not above us but all around us.