

Rather let appreciation of their worthiness accompany all reproving cheeks upon their extravagances. Let nimble fun, explosive jokes, festoon-faced humor, the whole tribe of gibes and quirks, every light, keen, and flashing weapon in the armory of which Punch is the keeper, be employed to make the world laugh, and put the world's laughter on the side of all right as against all wrong. If this be not done, the seriousness of life will darken into gloom, its work become slavish tasks, and the conflict waged be a terrible conflict between grim vir-

tues and fiendish vices. If you could shroud the bright skies with black tempest-clouds, burn to ashes the rainbow-hued flowers, strike dumb the sweet melodies of the grove, and turn to stagnant pools the silver streams,—if you could do this, thinking thereby to make earth more of a paradise, you would be scarcely less insane than if you were to denounce and banish all

“ Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
Sport, that wrinkled care derides,
And laughter, holding both his sides.”

THE SUBJECTIVE OF IT.

TOWARD the close of a dreamy, tranquil July day, a day made impressive beyond the possible comprehension of a dweller in civilization by its sun having risen for us over the unbroken wilderness of the Adirondack, a mountain-land in each of whose deep valleys lies a blue lake, we, a party of hunters and recreation-seekers, six beside our guides, lay on the fir-bough-cushioned floor of our dark camp, passing away the little remnant of what had been a day of rest to our guides and of delicious idleness to ourselves. The camp was built on the bold shore of a lake which yet wants a name worthy its beauty, but which we always, for want of such a one, call by that which its white discoverer left it, — *Tupper's Lake*, — whose waters, the untremulous mirror of the forests and mountains around and the sky above, gleamed to us only in blue fragments through the interstices of the leafy veil that intervened. The forest is unbroken to the water's edge, and even out over the water itself it stretches its firs and cedars, gray and moss-draped, with here and there a moisture-loving white-birch, so that from the very shore one sees only suggestive bits of distance and sky; and from where we were

lying, sky, hills, and the water below were all blue alike, and undistinguishable alike, glimpses of a world of sunlight, which the grateful shadow we lay in made delicious to the thought. We were sheltered right woodsman-like; — our little house of fresh-peeled bark of spruces, twelve feet by nine, open only to the east, on which side lay the lake, shielded us from wind and rain, and the huge trees shut around us so closely that no eye could pierce a pistol-shot into their glades. There were blue-jays all about us, making the woods ring with their querulous cries, and a single fish-hawk screamed from the blue overhead, as he sailed round and round, watching the chances of a supper in the lake. Between us and the water's edge, and a little to one side of the path we had bushed out to the shore, was the tent of the guides, and there they lay asleep, except one who was rubbing up his “man's” rifle, which had been forgotten the night before when we came in from the hunt, and so had gathered rust.

Three of our party were sleeping, and the others talked quietly and low, desultorily, as if the drowsiness had half conquered us too. The conversation had

rambled round from a discussion on the respective merits of the Sharp's and the Kentucky rifles (consequent on a trial of skill and rifles which we had had after dinner) to Spiritualism,—led to this last topic by my relation of some singular experiences I had met in the way of presentiments and what seemed almost like second-sight, during a three-months' sojourn in the woods several summers before. There is something wonderfully exciting to the imagination in the wilderness, after the first impression of monotony and lonesomeness has passed away and there comes the necessity to animate this so vacant world with something. And so the pines lift themselves grimly against the twilight sky, and the moanings of the woods become full of meaning and mystery. Living, therefore, summer after summer, as I had done, in the wilderness, until there is no place in the world which seems so much like a home to me as a bark camp in the Adirondack, I had come to be what most people would call morbid, but what I felt to be only sensitive to the things around, which we never see, but to which we all at times pay the deference of a tremor of inexplicable fear, a quicker and less deeply drawn breath, an involuntary turning of the head to see something which we know we shall not see, yet are glad to find that we do not,—all which things we laugh at as childish when they have passed, yet tremble at as readily when they come again. J., who was both poet and philosopher, singularly clear and cold in his analyses, and at the same time of so great imaginative power that he could set his creations at work and then look on and reason out the law of their working as though they were not his, had wonders to tell which always passed mine by a degree; his experiences were more various and marvellous than mine, yet he had a reason for everything, to which I was compelled to defer without being convinced. "Yes," said he, finally knocking out the ashes from his meerschaum, as we rose, at the Doctor's suggestion, to take a row out on the lake while the sun was setting,—

"Yes, I believe in *your* kind of a 'spiritual world,'—but that it is purely subjective."

I was silenced in a moment;—this single sentence, spoken like the expression of the experience of a lifetime, produced an effect which all his logic could not. He had rubbed some talismanic opal, pronouncing the spirit-compelling sentence engraved thereon, and a new world of doubts and mysteries, marvels and revelations burst on me. One phase of existence, which had been hitherto a reality to me, melted away into the thinness of an uncompleted dream; but as it melted away, there appeared behind it a whole universe, of which I had never before dreamed. I had puzzled my brains over the metaphysics of subjectivity and objectivity and found only words; now I grasped and comprehended the round of the thing. I looked through the full range of human cognitions, and found, from beginning to end, a proclamation of the presence of that arch-magician, Imagination. I had said to myself,—
"The universe is subjective to Deity, objective to me; but if I am his image, what is that part of me which corresponds to the Creator in Him?" Here I found myself, at last, the creator of a universe of unsubstantialities, all of the stuff that dreams are made of, and all alike unconsciously evoked, whether they were the dreams of sleep or the hauntings of waking hours. I grew bewildered as the thought loomed up in its eternal significance, and a thousand facts and phenomena, which had been standing in the darkness around my little circle of vision, burst into light and recognition, as though they had been waiting beyond the outer verge for the magic words. J. had spoken them.

Silent, almost for the moment unconscious of external things, in the intense exaltation of thought and feeling, I walked down to the shore. Taking the lightest and fleetest of our boats, we pushed off on the perfectly tranquil water. There was no flaw in the mirror which gave us a duplicated world.

Line for line, tint for tint, the noble mountain that lifts itself at the east, robed in primeval forest to its very summit, and now suffused with rosy light from the sun, already hidden from us by a low ridge in the west, was reproduced in the void below us. The shadow of the western ridge began to climb the opposite bluffs of the lake shore. We pulled well out into the lake and lay on our oars. If anything was said, I do not remember it. I was as one who had just heard words from the dead, and hears as prattle all the sounds of common life. My eyes, my ears, were opened anew to Nature, and it seemed even as if some new sense had been given me. I felt, as I never felt before, the cool gloom of the shadow creep up, ridge after ridge, towards the solitary peak, irresistibly and triumphantly encroaching on the light, which fought back towards the summit, where it must yield at last. It drew back over ravines and gorges, over the wildernesses of unbroken firs which covered all the upper portion of the mountain, deepening its rose-tint and gaining in intensity what it lost in expanse,—diminished to a handbreadth, to a point, and, flickering an instant, went out, leaving in the whole range of vision no speck of sunlight to relieve the wilderness of shadowy gloom. I had come under a spell,—for, often as I had seen the sun set in the mountains and over the lakes, I had never before felt as I now felt, that I was a part in the landscape, and that it was something more to me than rocks and trees. The sunlight had died on it. J. took up the oars and our silently-moving boat broke the glassy surface again. All around us no distinction was visible between the landscape above and that below, no water-line could be found; and to the west, where the sky was still glowing and golden, with faint bands of crimson cirrus swept across the deep and tremulous blue, growing purple as the sun sank lower, we could distinguish nothing in the landscape. Neither sound nor motion of animate or inanimate thing disturbed the scene, save that of

the oars, with the long lines of blue which ran off from the wake of the boat into the mystery closing behind us. A rifle-shot rang out from the landing and rolled in multitudinous echoes around the lake, dying away in faintest thunders and murmurings from the ravines on the side of the mountain. It was the call to supper, and we pulled back to the light of the fire, which was now glimmering through the trees from the front of the camp.

Supper over, the smokers lighted their pipes and a rambling conversation began on the sights and sounds of the day. For my own part, unable to quiet the uneasy questioning which possessed me, I wandered down to the shore and took a seat in the stern of one of the boats, which, hauled part of their length upon the sandy beach, reached out some distance among the lily-pads which covered the shallow water, and whose folded flowers dotted the surface, the white points alone visible. The uneasy question still stirred within me; and now, looking towards the northwest, where the sky yet glowed faintly with twilight, a long line of pines, gaunt and humanesque, as no tree but our northern white-pine is, was relieved in massy blackness against the golden gray, like a long procession of giants. They were in groups of two and three, with now and then an isolated one, stretching along the horizon, losing themselves in the gloom of the mountains at the north. The weirdness of the scene caught my excited imagination in an instant, and I became conscious of two mental phenomena. The first was an impression of motion in the trees, which, whimsical as it was, I had not the slightest power to dispel. I trembled from head to foot under the consciousness of this supernatural vitality. My rational faculties were as clear as ever they had been, and I understood perfectly that the semblance of motion was owing to two characteristics of the white-pine, namely,—that it follows the shores of the lakes in lines, rarely growing back at any distance from the water, except when it follows, in

the same orderly arrangement, the rocky ridges,—and that, from its height above all other forest-trees, it catches the full force of the prevalent winds, which here are from the west, and consequently leans slightly to the east, much as a person leans in walking. These traits of the tree explained entirely the phenomenon; yet the knowledge of them had not the slightest effect to undeceive my imagination. I was awe-struck, as though the phantoms of some antediluvian race had arisen from the valleys of the Adirondack and were marching in silence to their old fanes on the mountain-tops. I cowered in the boat under an absolute chill of nervous apprehension.—The second phenomenon was, that I heard *mentally* a voice which said distinctly these words,—“The procession of the Anakinim!”—and at the same time I became conscious of some disembodied spiritual being standing near me, as we are sometimes aware of the presence of a friend without having seen him. Every one accustomed to solitary thought has probably recognized this kind of mental action, and speculated on the strange duality of Nature implied in it. The spiritualists call it “impressionist communication,” and abandon themselves to its vagaries in the belief that it is really the speech of angels; men of thought find in it a mystery of mental organization, and avail themselves of it under the direction of their reason. I at present speculated with the philosophers; but my imagination, siding with the spiritualists, assured me that some one spoke to me, and reason was silenced. I sat still as long as I could endure it, alone, and then crept back, trembling, to the camp,—feeling quiet only when surrounded by the rest of the party.

My attendant dæmon did not leave me, I found; for now I heard the question asked, half-tauntingly,—“Subjective or objective?”

I asked myself, in reply,—“Am I mad or sane?”

“Quite sane, but with your eyes opened to something new!” was the instantaneous reply.

On such expeditions, men get back to the primitive usages and conditions of humanity. We had arisen at daybreak; darkness brought the disposition to rest. We arranged ourselves side by side on the couch of balsam and cedar boughs which the guides had spread on the ground of the camp, our feet to the fire, and all but myself soon slept. I lay a long time, excited, looking out through the open front of the camp at the stars which shone in through the trees, and even they seemed partakers of my new state of existence, and twinkled consciously and confidentially, as to one who shared the secret of their own existence and purposes. The pine-trees overhead had an added tone in their moanings, and indeed everything, as I regarded it, seemed to manifest a new life, to become identified with me: Nature and I had all things in common. I slept, at length,—a strange kind of sleep; for when the guides awoke me, in the full daylight, I was conscious of some one having talked with me through the night.

In broad day, with my companions, and in motion, the influences of the previous evening seemed to withdraw themselves to a remote distance,—yet I was aware of their awaiting me when I should be unoccupied. The day was as brilliant, as tranquil as its predecessor, and the council decided that it should be devoted to a “drive,” for we had eaten the last of our venison for breakfast. The party were assigned their places at those points of the lake where the deer would be most likely to take the water, while my guide, Steve M—, and myself went up Bog River, to start him. The river, a dark, sluggish stream, about fifty feet wide, the channel by which the Mud Lakes and Little Tupper’s Lake, with its connected lakes and ponds, empty into Tupper’s Lake, is a favorite feeding-ground with the deer, whose breakfast is made on the leaves of the *Nuphar lutea* which edge the stream. We surprised one, swimming around amongst the leaves, snatching here and there the choicest of them, and when he turned to go out and rose

in the water, as his feet touched bottom, I gave him a ball without fatal effect, and landing, we put Carlo on the track, which was marked by occasional drops and clots of blood, and hearing him well off into the woods, and in that furious and deep bay which indicates close pursuit, we went back to our boat and paddled upstream to a run-way Steve knew of, where the deer sometimes crossed the river. We pushed the boat into the overhanging alders which fringe the banks, leaning out into and over the water, and listened to the far-off bay of the hound. It died away and was entirely lost for a few minutes, and then came into hearing from the nearer side of the ridge, which lay back from the river a hundred rods or so, and I cocked my rifle while Steve silently pushed the boat out of the bushes, ready for a start, if the deer should "water." The baying receded again, and this time in the direction of the lake. The blood we had found on the trail was the bright, red, frothy blood which showed that the ball had passed through the lungs, and, as we knew that the deer would not run long before watering, we were sure that this would be his last turn and that he was making in earnest for the lake, where some of the boats would certainly catch him.

The excitement of the hunt had brought me back to a natural state of feeling, and now, as I lay in the stern of the boat, drifting slowly down-stream, and looked up into the hazy blue sky, in the whole expanse of which appeared no fragment of cloud, and the softened sunshine penetrated both soul and body, while the brain, lulled into lethargy by the unbroken silence and monotony of forest around, lost every trace of its midsummer madness,—I looked back to the state of the last evening as to a curious dream. I asked myself wherein it differed from a dream, and instantly my *dæmon* replied, "In no wise." The instant reply surprised me, without startling me from my lethargy. I responded, as a matter of course, "But if no more than a dream, it amounts to

nothing." It answered me, "But when a man dreams wide awake?" I pondered an instant, and it went on: "And how do you know that dreams are nothing? They are real while they last, and your waking life is no more; you wake to one and sleep to the other. Which is the real, and which the false? since you assume that one is false." I only asked myself again the eternal question, "Objective or subjective?" and the *dæmon* made no further suggestion. At this instant we heard the report of a gun from the lake. "That's the Doctor's shot-gun," said Steve, and pulled energetically down-stream; for we knew, that, if the Doctor had fired, the deer had come in,—and if he had missed the first shot, he had a second barrel, which we should have heard from.

Among the most charming cascades in the world is certainly that which Bog River makes where it falls into Tupper's Lake. Its amber water, black in the deep channel above the fall, dividing into several small streams, slips with a plunge of, it may be, six feet over the granite rocks, into a broad, deep pool, round which tall pines stand, and over which two or three delicate-leaved white-birches lean, from which basin the waters plunge in the final foamy rush of thirty or forty feet over the irregularly broken ledge which makes the bold shore of the lake. Between the two points of rock which confine the stream is thrown a bridge, part of the military road from the Mohawk settlements to those on the St. Lawrence, built during the war of 1812. On this bridge I waited until Steve had carried the boat around, when we reëmbarked for the camp.

Arriving at the landing, we found two of the guides dressing the Doctor's deer, and the others preparing for dinner. As night came on my excitement returned, and I remained in the camp while the others went out on the lake,—not from fear of such an experience as I had the night before, for I enjoyed the wild emotions, as one enjoys the raging of the sea around the rocks he stands on, with a

kind of tremulous apprehension,—but to see what effect the camp would produce on the state of feeling which I had begun to look at as something normal in my mental development. The rest of the party had gone out in two boats, and three of the guides, taking another, went on an excursion of their own; the two remaining, having cleared the supper-things away and lighted their pipes, were engaged in their tent, playing *old sledge* by the light of a single candle. There was a race out on the lake, and a far-off merriment, with an occasional halloo, like a suggestion of a busy world somewhere, but all so softened and toned down that it did not jar on my tranquillity. There was a crackling fire of green logs as large as the guides could lift and lay on, and they shimmered in the blaze, and lit up the surrounding tree-trunks and the overhanging foliage, and faintly explored the recesses of the forest beyond. I lay on the blankets, and near to me seemed to sit my *dæmon*, ready to be questioned.

At this instant there came a doubt of the theological position of my ghostly *vis-a-vis*, and I abruptly thought the question, “Who are you?”

“Nobody,” replied the *dæmon*, oracularly.

This I knew in one sense to be true; and I replied, “But you know what I mean. Don’t trifle. Of what nature is your personality?”

“Do you think,” it replied, “that personality is necessary to existence? We are spirit.”

“But wherein, save in the having or not having a body, do you differ from me?”

“In all the consequences of that difference.”

“Very well,—go on.”

“Don’t you see that without your circumstances you are only half a being?—that you are shaped by the action and reaction between your own mind and surrounding things, and that the body is the only medium of this action and reaction? Do you not see that without this there would have been no consciousness

of self, and consequently neither individuality nor personality? Remove those circumstances by removing the body, and do you not remove personality?”

“But,” said I, “you certainly have individuality, and wherein does that differ from personality?”

“Possibly you commit two mistakes,” replied the *dæmon*. “As to the distinction, it is one with a difference. You are personal to yourself, individual to others; and we, though individual to you, may be still impersonal. If spirit takes form from having something to act on, the fact that we act on you is sufficient, so far as you are concerned, to cause an individuality.”

I hesitated, puzzled.

It went on: “Don’t you see that the inertia of spirit is motion, as that of matter is rest? Now compare this universal spirit to a river flowing tranquilly, and which in itself gives no evidence of motion, save when it meets with some inert point of resistance. This point of resistance has the effect of action in itself, and you attribute to it all the eddies and ripples produced. You *must* see that your own immobility is the cause of the phenomena of life which give you your apparent existence;—our individuality to you may be just as much the effect of your personality; you find us only responsive to your own mental state.”

I was conscious of a sophistry somewhere, but could not, for the life of me, detect it. I thought of the Tempter; I almost feared to listen to another word; but the *dæmon* seemed so fair, so rational, and, above all, so confident of truth, that I could not entertain my fears.

“But,” said I, finally, “if my personality is owing to my physical circumstances, to my body and its immobility, what is the body itself owing to?”

“All physical or organic existence is owing to the antagonism between certain particles of matter, fixed and resistant, and the all-pervading, ever-flowing spirit; the different inertiae conflict, and end by combining in an organic being, since neither can be annihilated or transmuted.

ed. Perhaps we can tell you, by-and-by, how this antagonism commences; at present, you would scarcely be able to comprehend it clearly."

This I felt, for I was already getting confused with the questions that occurred to me as to the relations between spirit and matter.

I asked once more, "Have you never been personal, as I am?—have you never had a body and a name?"

"Perhaps," was the reply,—“but it must have been long since; and the trifling circumstances which you call life, with all their direct and recognizable effects, pass away so soon, that it is impossible to recall anything of it. There seems a kind of consciousness when we have something to act against, as against your mind at the present moment; but as to name, and all that kind of distinctiveness, what is the use of it where there is no possibility of confusion or mistake as to identity? We have said that we are spirit; and when we say that spirit is one and matter one, we have gone behind personal identity.”

“But,” asked I, “am I to lose my individual existence,—to become finally merged in a universal impersonality? What, then, is the object of life?”

“You see the plants and animals all around you growing up and passing away,—each entering its little orbit, and sweeping through this sphere of cognizance back again to the same mystery it emerged from; you never ask the question as to them, but for yourself you are anxious. If you had not been, would creation have been any less creation?—if you cease, will it not still be as great? Truly, though, your mistake is one of too little, not of too much. You assume that the animals become nothing; but, truly, nothing dies. The very crystals into which all the so-called primitive substances are formed, and which are the first forms of organization, have a spirit in them; for they obey something which inhabits and organizes them. If you could decompose the crystal, would you annihilate the soul

which organized it? The plant absorbs the crystal, and it becomes a part of a higher organization, which could no more exist without its soul; and if the plant is cut down and cast into the oven, is the organic impulse food for the flames? You, the animal, do but exist through the absorption of these vegetable substances, and why should you not obey the analogical law of absorption and aggregation? You killed a deer to-day;—the flesh you will appropriate to supply the wants of your own material organization; but the life, the spirit which made that flesh a deer, in obedience to which that shell of external appearance is moulded,—you missed that. You can trace the body in its metamorphoses; but for this impalpable, active, and only real part of the being,—it were folly to suppose it more perishable, more evanescent, than the matter of which it was master. And why should not you, as well as the deer, go back into the great Life from which you came? As to a purpose in creation, why should there be any other than that which existence always shows,—that of existing?”

I now began to notice that all the leading ideas which the daemon offered were put in the form of questions, as if from a cautious non-committalism, or as if it dared not in so many words say that they were the absolute truth. I felt that there was another side to the matter, and was confident that I should detect the sophistry of the daemon; but then I did not feel able to carry the conversation farther, and was sensible of a readiness on the part of my interlocutor to cease. I wondered at this, and if it implied weariness on its part, when it was replied,—“We answer to your own mind; of course, when that ceases to act, there ceases to be reaction.” I cried out in my own mind, in utter bewilderment,—“Objective or subjective?” and ceased my questionings.

The camp-fire glowed splendidly through the overhanging branches and foliage, and I longed for a revel of light. I asked the guides to make a “blaze,” and, after a minute’s delay and an ejaculation of

"Game, to your high, low, jack," they emerged from the tent and in a few minutes had cut down several small dead spruces and piled the tops on the fire, which flashed up through the pitchy, inflammable mass, and we had a pyrotechnical display which startled the birds, that had gone to rest in the assurance of night, into a confused activity and clamor. The heat penetrated the camp and gave me a drowsiness which my disturbed repose of the night before rendered extremely grateful, and when the rest of the party returned from their row, I was asleep.

It was determined, the next morning, in council, to move; and one of the guides having informed us of a newly-opened carry, by which we could cross from Little Tupper's Lake, ten miles above us, directly to Forked Lake, and thence following the usual route down the Raquette River and through Long Lake, we could reach Martin's on Saranac Lake without retracing our steps, except over the short distance from the Raquette through the Saranac Lakes,—after breakfast, we hurriedly packed up our traps and were off as early as might be. It is hard boating up the Bog River, and hard work both for guides and tourists. All the boats and baggage had to be carried three miles, on the backs of the guides, and, help them as much as we could, the day had drawn nearly to its close before we were fairly embarked on Little Tupper's, and we had then nearly ten miles to go before reaching Constable's Camp, where we were to stop for the night. I worked hard all day, but in a kind of dream, as if the dead weight I carried with weariness were only the phantom of something, and I were a fantasy carrying it;—the actual had become visionary, and my imaginings nudged me and jostled me almost off the path of reason. But I had no time for a *séance* with my *dæmon*. The next day I devoted with the guides to bushing out the carry across to Forked Lake, about three and a half miles, through perfectly pathless woods; for we found Sam's statements as to the carry

being chopped out entirely false; only a blazed line existed; so all the guides, except one, set to work with myself bushing and chopping out, while the other guide and the rest of the party spent the day in hunting. At the close of the day we had completed nearly two miles of the path, and returned to Constable's Camp to sleep. The next day we succeeded in getting the boats and baggage through to Bottle Pond, two and a half miles, and the whole party camped on the carry,—the guides anathematizing Sam, whose advice had led us on this road. The next afternoon found us afloat on Forked Lake, weary and glad to be in the sunlight on blue water again. Hard work and the excitement of responsibility in engineering our road-making operations had kept my visitor from dream-land away, and as we paddled leisurely down the beautiful lake,—one of the few yet untouched by the lumbermen,—I felt a healthier tone of mind than I had known since we had entered the woods. As we ran out of one of the deep bays which constitute a large portion of the lake, into the principal sheet of water, one of the most perfectly beautiful mountain-views I have ever seen burst upon us. We looked down the lake to its outlet, five miles, between banks covered with tall pines, and far away in the hazy atmosphere a chain of blue peaks raised themselves sharp-edged against the sky. One singularly-shaped summit, far to the south, attracted my attention, and I was about to ask its name, when Steve called out, with the air of one who communicates something of more than ordinary significance,—*"Blue Mountain!"* The name, Steve's manner, and I know not what of mysterious cause, gave to the place a strange importance. I felt a new and unaccountable attraction to the mountain. Some enchantment seemed to be casting its glamour over me from that distance even. There was thenceforward no goal for my wanderings but the Blue Mountain. It is a solitary peak, one of the southernmost of the Adirondacks, of

a very quaint form, and lies in a circle of lakes, three of which in a chain are named from the mountain. The way by which the mountain is reached is through these lakes, and their outlet, which empties into Raquette Lake. I had determined to remain in the woods some weeks, and now concluded to return, as soon as I had seen the rest of the party on their way home, and take up quarters on Raquette Lake for the rest of my stay.

That night we camped at the foot of Forked Lake, and not one of the party will ever forget the thunder-storm that burst on us in our woods-encampment among the tall pines, two of which, near us, were struck by the lightning. I tried in vain, when we were quiet for the night, to get some information on the subject of my attraction to the Blue Mountain. My dæmon appeared remote and made no responses. It seemed as if, knowing my resolution to stay alone there, it had resolved to be silent until I was without any cause for interruption of our colloquies. Save the consciousness of its remote attendance, I felt no recurrence of my past experience, until, having seen my friends on the road to civilization again, I left Martin's with Steve and Carlo for my quarters on the Raquette. We hurried back up the river as fast as four strong arms could propel our light boat, and resting, the second night, at Wilbur's, on Raquette Lake, I the next morning selected a site for a camp, where we built a neat little bark-house, proof against all discomforts of an elemental character, and that night I rested under my own roof, squatter though I was. The dæmon seemed in no haste to renew our former intimate intercourse,—for what reason I could not divine; but a few days after my settling, days spent in exploring and planning, it resumed suddenly its functions. It came to me out on the lake, where I had paddled to enjoy the starlight in the delicious evening, when the sky was filled with luminous vapor, through which the stars struggled dimly, and in which the landscape was almost as clearly visible as by moonlight.

"Well!" said I, familiarly, as I felt it take its place by my side, "you have come back."

"Come back!" it replied; "will you never get beyond your miserable ideas of space, and learn that there is no separation but that of feeling, no nearness but that of sympathy? If you had cared enough for us, we should have been with you constantly."

I was anxious to get to the subject of present interest, and did not stop to discuss a point which, in one, and the highest sense, I admitted.

"What," I asked, "was that impulse which urged me to go to the Blue Mountain? Shall I find there anything supernatural?"

"Anything supernatural? What is there above Nature, or outside of it?"

"But nothing is without cause; and for an emotion so strong as I experienced, on the sight of those mountains, there must have been one."

"Very likely! if you go after it, you will find it. You probably expect to find some beautiful enchantress keeping her court on the mountain-top, and a suite of fairies."

I started, for, absurd as it may seem, that very idea, half-formed, undeveloped from very shame at my superstition, had rested in my mind.

"And," said I, at a loss what to say, "are there no such things possible?"

"All things are possible to the imagination."

"To create?"

"Most certainly! Is not creation the act of bringing into existence? and does not your Hamlet exist as immortally as your Shakspeare? The only true existence, is it not that of the Idea? Have you not seen the pines transfigured?"

"And if I imagined a race of fairies inhabiting the Blue Mountain, should I find them?"

"If you *imagined* them, yes! But the imagination is not voluntary; it works to supply a necessity; its function is creation, and creation is needed only to fill a vacuum. The wild Arab, feeling his

own insignificance, and comprehending the necessity for a Creating Power, finds between himself and that Power, which to him, as to you the other day, assumes a personality, an immense distance, and fills the space with a race half divine, half human. It was the necessity for the fairy which created the fairy. You do not feel the same distance between yourself and a Creator, and so you do not call into existence a creative race of the same character; but has not your own imagination furnished you with images to which you may give your reverence? It may be that you diminish that distance by degrading the Great First Cause to an image of your personality, and so are not so wise as the Arab, who at once admits it to be unattainable. Each man shapes that which he looks up to by his desires or fears, and these in their turn are the results of his degree of development."

"But God, is not He the Supreme Creator?"

"Is it not as we said, that you measure the Supreme by yourself? Can you not comprehend a supreme law, an order which controls all things?"

In my meditations this doubt had often presented itself to me, and I had as often put it resolutely aside; but now to hear it urged on me in this way from this mysterious presence troubled me, and I shrank from further discussion of the topic. I earnestly desired a fuller knowledge of the nature of my colloquist.

"Tell me," said I, "do you not take cognizance of my personality?—do you read my past and my future?"

"Your past and future are contained in your present. Who can analyze what you are can see the things which made you such; for effect contains its cause;—to see the future, it needs only to know the laws which govern all things. It is a simple problem: you being given, with the inevitable tendencies to which you are subject, the result is your future; the flight of one of your rifle-balls cannot be calculated with greater certainty."

"But how shall we know those laws?" said I.

"You contain them all, for you are the result of them; and they are always the same,—not one code for your beginning, and another for your continuance. Man is the complete embodiment of all the laws thus far developed, and you have only to know yourself to know the history of creation."

This I could not gainsay, and my mind, wearied, declined to ask further. I returned to camp and went to sleep.

Several days passed without any remarkable progress in my knowledge of this strange being, though I found myself growing more and more sensitive to the presence of it each day; and at the same time the incomprehensible sympathy with Nature, for I know not what else to call it, seemed growing stronger and more startling in the effects it produced on the landscape. The influence was no longer confined to twilight, but made noon-day mystical; and I began to hear strange sounds and words spoken by disembodied voices,—not like that of my dæmon, but unaccompanied by any feeling of personal presence connected therewith. It seemed as if the vibrations shaped themselves into words, some of them of singular significance. I heard my name called, and the strangest laughs on the lake at night. My dæmon seemed averse to answering any questions on the topic of these illusions. The only reply was,—“You would be wiser, not knowing too much.”

Ere many days of this solitary life had passed, I found my whole existence taken up by my fantasies. I determined to make my excursion to the Blue Mountain, and, sending Steve down to the post-office, a three-days' journey, I took the boat, with Carlo and my rifle, and pushed off. The outlet of the Blue Mountain Lakes is like all the Adirondack streams, dark and shut in by forest, which scarcely permits landing anywhere. Now and then a log fallen into the water compels the voyager to get out and lift his boat over; then a shallow rapid must be dragged over; and when the stream is clear of obstruc-

tion, it is too narrow for any mode of propulsion but poling or paddling.

I had worked several weary hours, and the sun had passed the meridian, when I emerged from the forest into a wild, swampy flat,—“wild meadow,” the guides call it,—through which the stream wound, and around which was a growth of tall larches backed by pines. Where the brook seemed to reënter the wood on the opposite side, stood two immense pines, like sentinels, and such they became to me; and they looked grim and threatening, with their huge arms reaching over the gateway. I drew my boat up on the boggy shore at the foot of a solitary tamarack, into which I climbed as high as I could to look over the wood beyond.

Never shall I forget what I saw from that swaying look-out. Before me was the mountain, perhaps five miles away, covered with dense forest to within a few hundred feet of the summit, which showed bare rock with firs clinging in the clefts and on the tables, and which was crowned by a walled city, the parapet of whose walls cut with a sharp, straight line against the sky, and beyond showed spire and turret and the tops of tall trees. The walls must have been at least a hundred and fifty feet high, and I could see here and there between the group of firs traces of a road coming down the mountain-side. And I heard one of those mocking voices say, “The city of silence!”—nothing more. I felt strongly tempted to start on a flight through the air towards the city, and why I did not launch forth on the impulse I know not. My blood rushed through my veins with maddest energy, and my brain seemed to have been replaced by some ethereal substance, and to be capable of floating me off as if it were a balloon. Yet I clung and looked, my whole soul in my eyes, and had no thought of losing the spectacle for an instant, even were it to reach the city itself. The glorious glamour of that place and moment, who can comprehend it? The wind swung my tree-top to and fro, and I climbed up until the tree bent with my weight like a twig under a bird’s.

Presently I heard bells and strains of music, as though all the military bands in the city were coming together on the walls; and the sounds rose and fell with the wind,—one moment entirely lost, another full and triumphant. Then I heard the sound of hunting-horns and the baying of a pack of hounds, deep-mouthed, as if a hunting-party were coming down the mountain-side. Nearer and nearer they came, and I heard merry laughing and shouting as they swept through the valley. I feared for a moment that they would find me there, and drive me, intruding, from the enchanted land.

But I must fathom the mystery, let what would come. I descended the tree, and when I had reached the boat again I found the whole thing changed. I understood that my city was only granite and fir-trees, and my music only the wind in the tree-tops. The reaction was sickening; the sunshine seemed dull and cold after the lost glory of that enchantment. The Blue Mountain was reached, its destiny fulfilled for me, and I returned to my camp, sick at heart, as one who has had a dear illusion dispelled.

The next day my mind was unusually calm and clear. I asked my daemon what was the meaning of the enchantment of yesterday.

“It was a freak of your imagination,” it replied.

“But what is this imagination, then, which, being a faculty of my own, yet masters my reason?”

“Not at all a faculty, but your very highest self, your own life in creative activity. Your reason is a faculty, and is subordinate to the purposes of your imagination. If, instead of regarding imagination as a pendant to your mental organization, you take it for what it is, a function, and the noblest one your mind knows, you will see at once why it is that it works unconsciously, just as you live unconsciously and involuntarily. Men set their reason and feeling to subdue what they consider a treacherous element in themselves; they succeed only

in dwarfing their natures, and imagination is inert while reason controls; but when reason rests in sleep, and you cease to live to the external world, imagination resumes its normal power. You dream;—it is only the revival of that which you smother when you are awake. You consider the sights and sounds of yesterday follies; you reason;—imagination demonstrates its power by overturning your reason and deceiving your very senses.”

“You speak of its creations; I understand this in a certain sense; but if these were such, should not they have permanence? and can anything created perish?”

“Nonsense! what will these trees be to-morrow? and the rocks you sit on, are they not changing to vegetation under you? The only creation is that of ideas; things are thin shadows. If man is not creative, he is still undeveloped.”

“But is not such an assumption trenching on the supremacy of God?” I asked.

“What do you understand by ‘God?’”

“An infinitely wise and loving Controller of events, of course,” I replied.

“Did you ever find any one whose ideas on the subject agreed with yours?”

“Not entirely.”

“Then your God is not the same as the God of other men; from the Fee-Jeean to the Christian there is a wide range. Of course there is a first great principle of life; but this personality you all worship, is it not a creation?”

I now felt this to be the great point of the daemon's urging; it recurred too often not to be designed. Led on by the sophistry of my tempter, I had floated unconsciously to this issue, practically admitting all; but when this suggestion stood completely unclothed before me, my soul rose in horror at the abyss before it. For an instant all was chaos, and the very order of Nature seemed disorder. Life and light vanished from the face of the earth; my night made all things dead and dark. A universe without a God! Creation seemed to me for that moment but a galvanized corse. What my emotions were no human being who has not felt them can conceive. My first impulse was to suicide; with the next I cried from the depths of my despair, “God deliver me from the body of this death!” It was but a moment,—and there came, in the place of the cold questioning voice of my daemon, one of ineffable music, repeating words familiar to me from childhood, words linked to everything loved and lovely in my past:—“Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” The hot tears for another moment blotted out the world from sight. I said once more to the questioner, “Now who *are* you?”

“Your own doubts,” was the reply; and it seemed as if only I spoke to myself.

Since that day I have never reasoned with my doubts, never doubted my imagination.

ALL'S WELL.

SWEET-VOICED Hope, thy fine discourse
 Foretold not half life's good to me;
 Thy painter, Fancy, hath not force
 To show how sweet it is to be!
 Thy witching dream
 And pictured scheme
 To match the fact still want the power;
 Thy promise brave
 From birth to grave
 Life's boon may beggar in an hour.