

in his own integrity. Everything is on their side: the temptations of the devil; the suggestions of his own fears; his wish to be rid of their tormenting insinuations. Why does he not yield a little? Why not say, "It may be so! Perhaps you are right"? That would satisfy them: he might reckon at once on their sympathy and prayers. How many of us would have yielded all, rather than be troubled to argue with them. Not so; Job. No "reed shaken of the wind" is he; but a tree—a strong, grand tree—scathed by the lightnings, it is true, and quivering like the aspen, to the uttermost leaf of the furthest spray: but still as deeply rooted as ever, and as determined in his resistance to all spiritual attacks. He tells them openly that he recognizes in them the malice of Satan, by whom he is "wounded in the house of his friends;" that he knows his infernal adversary is let loose upon him, and that all they say is but further proof of it. And still, amidst the din of controversy—in which he contends,—alone, as he believes, against earth and hell—amid the onslaught of pain, doubt, and frenzy, fell enemies urged on by the Devil himself—under the canopy of a darkened heaven, and a sky that is as brass to his complainings—forsaken, confused, and wounded; still, he stands at bay—like the standard-bearer of a defeated host, beset alone by his enemies, mangled by their thrusts and blows,

"Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,"—

but unable as ever to yield—and, amid the closing darkness, still upholding above the polluting breath of that hostile array, the white ensign of his innocence, upon which, dying he will fall,—that he may be buried still grasping it on the lonely field. And then, see his firm *trust in God*. Everything is against this. He has been stricken, terribly stricken, when he had no consciousness that he deserved it. And He who permitted this,—instead of appearing, to explain the mystery,—has hidden Himself from His servant. All around in the darkness does the Patriarch grope after Him, but it is in vain. "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; on the right hand He hideth Himself, but I cannot

see Him: but"—and oh, how glorious, how heroic it is!—"but He knoweth the way I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He cries again and again to the heavens, but there is no voice, nor any (apparently) that regardeth. The clouds are black and thick above him. The lightnings play around his head. Already they have struck off his branches; already left him a scarred and blackened trunk, monumental of misfortune. The next blow may cleave him to the ground. But he fears it not. He sits upon a dunghill indeed; but, with him upon it, that dunghill is a throne. He looks calmly to the threatening cloud. His bald, bare head is ready. Let it come, It will make no difference in his confidence—"Though He *slay* me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before Him." This is, in real life, just what the poet Campbell has put into the lips of an imaginary character, whom he calls "the last man." He supposes the one survivor of the human race, following the sun, in the hour of his last setting, with words like these:—

"Go, Sun, while mercy holds me up  
On Nature's awful waste  
To drink this last and bitter cup  
Of wrath that man shall taste.  
Go, tell the night that hides thy face  
Thou heards't the last of Adam's race  
On earth's sepulchral clod  
The darkening universe defy,  
To quench his immortality,  
Or shake his trust in God!"

Such a declaration, under such circumstances, would be heroic; but not one whit more so than the conduct of Job. For him the universe *was* darkened. Not a gleam of light remained. But his trust in God was as strong as ever. Was he not a hero? Did imagination ever picture a character so tender, yet so strong!

And yet this was no more than a man; a man of like passions with us; a man as weak and full of infirmity as we; a man who, before he was tried, had no more of the hero apparent about him than yourselves; who, when tried, had no other support than is promised to you, and promised to you in a higher degree than to him.—All the strength and tenderness that formed the original character of Job are slumbering in the calm depths of your own