

ture in infinite series, not like a tree whose boughs and branches, bearing a necessary relation and due proportion to each other, combine into one beautiful form, but resembling such plants as the prickly pear, where one joint grows upon another, all equal in size and alike in shape, and the whole making a formless and misshapen mass."

Preferring to invent for myself an entirely original story, I have taken from Sir Thomas Malory's compilation little more than the general adoption of chivalrous usages and manners, and those agencies from the marvellous which chivalrous romance naturally affords—the Fairy, the Genius, the Enchanter; not wholly, indeed, in the literal spirit with which our nursery tales receive those creations of fancy through the medium of French Fabliaux, but in the larger and deeper signification by which in their conceptions of the supernatural our fathers often implied the secrets of Nature. For the Romance from which I borrow is the Romance of the North—a Romance, like the Northern mythology, full of typical meaning and latent import. The gigantic remains of symbol worship are visible amidst the rude fables of the Scandinavians, and what little is left to us of the earlier and more indigenous literature of the Cymrians, is characterized by a mysticism profound with parable. This fondness for an interior or double meaning is the most prominent attribute of that Romance popularly called *The Gothic*, the feature most in common with all creations that bear the stamp of the Northern fancy; we trace it in the poems of the Anglo-Saxons; it returns to us, in our earliest poems