

A REVELATION.

"ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary," over pebbles, shells, and curious geological specimens, I grew discouraged as I thought of the vast field that lay before me in this one science, in which I had only gathered a few stones, or looked at the soil in an easy amateur-farmer fashion, without having delved or ploughed, or seen one seed of my own sowing grow, or reaped one 'sheaf' of other's sowing; never had I agreed more fully with Solomon when he said, "Much learning is a weariness to the flesh." I thought surely geology is "vanity," and so gave myself up to idly watching the fire as it blazed up fiercely for a moment, then sank down into a quiet blaze, then again sent up a Vesuvius-like line of fire and smoke. I was just wishing that I had been the one living thing in the Aztec age, before there had been anything to know anything about, when my eyes fell on part of the jaw-bone of a mastodon. I pushed it impatiently out of sight with my foot, and returned to my discontented musings, but scarce a minute had passed when I shivered, not from the cold, not from a draught, but from a vague sense of terror. The hair of my flesh stood up. I turned quickly. There, close beside me, was a veritable mastodon—reaching above the room and beyond the room, but I could tell nothing more definite of its size. I have had somewhat similar sensations when in a small boat on a "wide sea," on a dark night, and a large steamer has suddenly come very close, its paddle-wheel just missing the oars.

When I had recovered my senses sufficiently to look at him, I saw that the jaw-bone that a minute before was on my hearth, *my* jaw-bone was *his* jaw-bone—it seemed the most prominent part of him. One little twinkling black eye looked down upon me. I knew then how a chicken feels when I look at it—that little black eye peered at me, leered at me, jeered at me, then there was a queer guttural sound. Horrors! It was speaking! Terribly frightened though I was, I listened. "So-ho!" said he, "you're too lazy to learn very much, are you?" This was followed by a noise which, had he been human, would have been called a half-suppressed triumphant chuckle; he

was evidently immensely delighted at my fear; he was having his revenge for the indignities heaped upon one of his members. He gave an elephantine cough, and resumed his remarks. "You must know," he began, "that there is a place where the good mastodons go, but for a trivial offence, which I need not mention—(he here gave a toss of his trunk so like the backward motion of our hands as we dismiss our pecadilloes)—I am condemned to wander about this earth. On the anniversary of my death I gather up my bones and dust, taking visible shape wherever my last bone lies. Know, oh man," he went on, "that as we have had our day and have disappeared from off the earth, so shall all things have their day and disappear, and as from our ashes new and great things arose, so it is from the ashes of all other things. You short-lived mortals are filled with wonder at the remnants of past intelligence and skill which you find, and that such darkness followed so much light. It is the inevitable. This darkness is what will shortly be upon the earth again. The amount of learning which it is necessary to accumulate to-day, to be ordinarily intelligent, is rapidly becoming too great for man's little mind to bear. There will be an astonishing relapse into ignorance. Why," said he, making a digression, "by my grandfather's ghost! one of you poor mortals gives his life-time to trying to understand my teeth, and writes many a book thereupon, and gains a name thereby; then it takes five years' course for the other mortals to study up my incisors. You 'were born both too early and too late.' In a few generations more your descendants will be lighting their fires with all these clever books, and building huts of your precious 'specimens!'"

One of his huge ears was patronizingly flapped against my cheek, the jaw-bone rattled on the hearth, and I was alone, not feeling sure whether I ought to be glad or sorry for the generations to come.

PORTUGAL has but one university, Coimbra, founded in 1290. It has 70 instructors, and 1,100 students. There are 2,450 elementary schools, and parents whose children cannot read and write by fifteen years of age, lose their political rights.