

EAST AND WEST.

BY PROF. EDWARD J. CHAPMAN, PH.D., LL.D.

THE PROLOGUE.

ART thou the old dream dreaming?
Poor heart, of the morrow beware—
Death may lurk in the brown eyes' veil'd
gleaming,

In the white throat so wondrously fair.
The tones that wild heart-throbs awaken—
The sheen of the gold-shower'd hair—
The touch that thy soul hath so shaken—
May lure thee, and leave thee—ah,
where?

Trust it not, the wild, treacherous glad-
ness—

The twin hounds of Passion and Pain
Are swift to arise—in their madness
They rend, and they rest not again!

The day-dream is sweet in the dreaming,
But dreamless the night's dull despair,
When the voice, and the touch, and the
gleaming,

Have lured thee, and left thee—ah,
where?

“ We look before and after,
And pine for what is not.”

THE WEST.

The sultry day is well-nigh done,
Aflame is all the fiery west—
The giant snow-peaks, one by one,
Are crimson'd by the great red sun
Whose glory gilds each gleaming crest.
And far—upon the golden sky,
A black fleck floating silently—
A solitary eagle sweeps
Its way across those trackless deeps :
As trackless as a frozen sea
Whose waves have never stir nor sound
In all its weird immensity.
Below, the foot-hills stretch around
Mile after mile—untrack'd, untraced,
A desolate and dreary waste
Of shattered rock and clinging pine,
Deep-cleft by many a jagged line
Of lonely gulch and cavern hoar,
Where night is in the noon of day—
And months and years go on alway—

And still, as in the days that were
Those western hills are wild and bare,
The eagle's home, the lean wolf's lair—
Unchanged, and changeless evermore!

But deep within—the rocky core
Of those lone mountains, rent and old,
Is seam'd and vein'd with glittering ore,
And lurid with the gleam of gold.
So, to those savage wilds have come
A few wrecked souls, as savage. Some
By the fierce gold-thirst thither led,
And some from human vengeance fled,
And some world-chased by bitter wrong—
Rough, reckless, bearded, bold and strong,
They come from far-off lands and climes,
But little speak of earlier times,
Each living as it seems him best,
Alone, and heedless of the rest.

The daylight softly ebbs away,
Though lingering still with tender ray,
And still the sunset's waning glow
Climbs slowly up those wastes of snow :
But here and there faint stars are seen
In the blue gaps that lie between
The glimmering peaks, and all below
Is grey with creeping mist. The stroke
Of restless pick, whose rhythmic clang
All day among the mountains rang,
And many a wild, weird echo woke,
Is silent now ; but yet no sound
Or stir of life is there reveal'd
Among the scatter'd huts around.
To-night they linger long a-field,
Those toilers of Earth's stony womb—
But now, slow-growing through the gloom
Dark forms in shadowy groups appear :
And two among them gently bear
A human burden—ghastly, wan,
And black with powder—one in whom
The likeness of a living man
Is well-nigh all crush'd out. And they,
Those hard, rough miners—tender now
As very women—softly lay,
With silent footsteps, sad and slow,
Their comrade in his lowly hut,
Where gaunt and grey 'the rocks out-jut
Across the jagged rift below.