

wood's character, the artistic side, which it would be unjust in a biographer to pass over.

AUGUST, 18—

THE LOUVRE, PARIS.

*My dear old fellow.*

Here I am, pen in hand, before that master piece of human art—the Venus of Milo. I have taken out my tablet to write to you, and at the same time while away the hour and a half to dinner when I expect Byrne to turn up. He was out some where or other all last night. We do not enquire into each other's movements. I think it is wiser not to do so when two fellows are travelling together. However, exit Byrne, and now let me have you all to myself. First, let me describe my surroundings in order to explain this letter and what called it forth. I am sitting at one end of a bench, tolerably comfortable (a matter of no interest to you and of much to me). Before me, within a little railing, is the Venus. She stands out white and lovely against a rich crimson plush curtain. At the other end of the bench on which I sit (it is a very long bench you may be sure) is an old peasant woman, waiting for her octogenarian husband who is hobbling about in juvenile inquisitiveness, among the Greek crudities and nudities in the other rooms. Here then, I am alone in the presence of two females. Both are old, both bear traces of time's blighting touch. Both are silent, and seem wrapped in the contemplation of objects beyond our ken. One is cold and hard but beautiful and white. The flesh of the other is warm and soft but it is ugly and brown. The breasts of the one have suckled no children as the long years have died away, while the other bears all the evidences of maternity and her now poor withered bosom has many times over been the cradle of future nations. The brow of