

monics in England. Yet, when on my way to Salisbury Plain, in a little fold of the Moor, I came upon a moss-grown farmstead, a little hamlet nestling by itself in that grassy and protected hollow. In a green before the farmstead was planted the May-pole, hung with gay and garlanded ribbons. Around it the children were keeping holiday; dancing in the ancient ceremonial, by which, thousands of years before, their ancestors had been wont worshipfully to welcome in the Spring. By this time, perhaps, even in that little hamlet, the children, now grown up, have been schooled out of their superstitions; and will leave no successors to repeat to future travellers that beautiful survival of the picturesque beliefs of the primitive time. The altars which the schools have levelled, the spirit of art may well occupy itself in re-erecting. Veneration revives as we piously retread the dust of the Sacred Way which led our primeval forefathers from darkness up to God. We retrace the wide-worn channel back to the ancient springs of thought and being. It may be the highest office of art to recultivate the profound piety and veneration of the heathen of the past, so glibly derided, yet, perhaps, so much profounder than our own. The groves, whose majesty we carelessly ravage, are instinct with primitive thought. The very stones cry out to us. Every step that we take should be as upon hallowed ground.

THE HOUSE OF RUINS.

HALF down the lonely vale where sunbeams creep
 Along the wild grown grass, one noonday hour,
 The old house stands, enwrapt in dreams and sleep,
 And through the gloom the ancient gables tower
 Above the ivy clinging on its walls;
 And on the mould'ring eaves the martens sit
 Through all the day, and when the twilight falls
 Out from the casements dark the black bats flit.

Upon the strangled path, should strange feet press,
 And should a strange hand knock upon the door
 That creaks and whines in plaintive-toned distress,
 A sound of feet might pass along the floor,
 And ghostly voices fill the vacant halls;
 Unwonted things might stare from out the gloom,
 And murmurs creep along the sunken walls,
 Bowled down beneath some dark and ancient doom.

Along the flowerless and the wild-grown lawns
 The thistle and the long-leaved mullein bloom;
 And scarce a bird chirps as the morning dawns,
 And not a flower gleams in the sunless gloom;
 And no fruit flushes on the gnarled, old trees
 Whose grey briarian branches now are grown
 A brushwood tangle where the sunset breeze
 Forever wails a mournful monotone.