

and death. In youth, we see in all the various occupations and pursuits of mankind only so many different means of employing our various talents and yet unslackened energies. We regard life as a series of games in which bold players are sure to win, and active contestants sure to gain laurels. And we smooth our cool brows and gird up our strong loins and, confident of success, enter the lists. While we are still lads we insensibly drop mere boyish sports, mimic the pursuits of busy men, and find unalloyed delight in the imitation. We seize upon the attractive features which the stir and hurry of business exhibit, and are happily all unconscious of the cares and troubles that encircle and follow all this ardent, anxious activity. We are as yet quite ignorant of the selfish and sordid, and often utterly base, motives that are in real life the secret springs of all this industry and constant exertion. We see only the outside of the world, and have not penetrated through its fair-seeming surface to the bitterness that envelopes its core. If we have, perchance, learned from the pages of history or from our own limited observation that there has been, and still is, much that is wrong in the course of human affairs, we fondly believe, notwithstanding, that mankind are making rapid progress towards a better and happier condition. The world, with its admitted faults, is not such a bad world after all. We form the highest hopes of that glorious future that lies apparently just before us. We even secretly cherish, it may be, a vague notion that we have some grand part to play in reforming what is plainly amiss. And we determine that the world shall, in some way or other, be the better for our disinterested and earnest efforts to improve it. Experience has not yet taught us to distrust our own powers or to mistrust the professions of others. True, some men with whom we are acquainted may have failed in their callings or enterprises, public or private. But we, wise in our own conceit of ourselves, see clearly how the rocks on which they split may easily be avoided. We are setting out on the voyage of life under happier auspices and shall be guided by more benign stars. If we have not been brought up under the influence of hard and cynical teachers, and are not prematurely old in our habits of thought and feeling, we behold everything in that fresh, rosy morning-light which youth and hope shed around us. We heed not at all the clouds which, now lying peaceably near the horizon, may rise to darken our noon-day, or the breezes, now gentle, which may swell into a storm before our sun is set.

*" Little we dream when life is new,
And Nature fresh and fair to view,
When beats the heart with rapture true,
As if for naught it wanted;
That year by year, and day by day,
Romance's sunlight dies away,
And long before the hair is grey
The heart is disenchanted."*

But, although the disenchantment is sure to come in one way or another at some stage of our journey through the world, we have no apprehension of the fact until we have experienced its truth by some