

comes before the cutting of the grass. All up the sides of the valley the meadows were ripe for the scythe; the dark-red spires of the sorrel and the white stars of the ox-eye daisy bent softly in the warm south breeze. Down below the level of the eye, in the very heart of the Combe, a fringe of reeds and little willows marked the lowly course of the brook. No one who noted its insignificant proportions would have guessed—unless he were a true disciple of Isaak Walton—what plump trout glided over its clear gravel bed.

In the fine pasturage of the glebe meadows, the red-brown cows were gathered under a tree, out of the hot sparkle of the sun. The orchards had lost their bewildering glory of bloom, except just here and there, where a late apple-tree shoot was still decorated with coral-tinted wreath.

And beyond the orchards was the crown of summer sea—

} "The liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,  
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage-ring of the land,"

thought Allonby, who was altogether in a Tennysonian frame of mind that morning. He could not help it. The fresh loveliness of his surroundings impressed him with a dreamy delight, and he loved nothing so well as the luxury of yielding to his impressions. He was filled with a blending of indescribable emotions, longings, desires; wondering how anyone managed to live in London and yet retain any powers of mind and thought.

"I have been here two days," he sighed, "and my range of ideas is stretching, stretching, like the handkerchief in the fairy-tale which stretched into a gown. My horizon is widening, my standard of perfection is rising; I shall either die, if it goes on much longer, or become a totally different person. Farewell, my old self, with your trivial daubs, your dingy studio, your faded London models. Let us go in for the shearing of sheep under burning skies, for moon-rise on the waters of an endless sea, for the white, dusty perspective of the village street, or for Mary, the maid of the inn!"

Mr. Allonby, as will have been gathered from this fragment, was not a strikingly coherent thinker; but to-day he was certainly more wool-gathering than usual, and he had not even strength to be angry with himself for the same.

"Temperament," he went on, lazily "national tempera-