

In Tennyson's poem we have one or two examples of that sense of the infinite and mystic which is so characteristic of the Teutonic mind, and which is so distasteful to the clear definiteness of the Greek. For instance:

"Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'

"Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades

"Forever and forever when I move."

Then again, Ulysses' determination to sail beyond the sunset, in search of death, is highly mystic, and reminds us strongly of the funeral of the Sea King of old:

"For my purpose holds

"To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths

"Of all the western stars, un'til I die.

"It may be that the gulfs will wash us down,

"It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles

"And see the great Achilles whom we knew."

BEFORE THE SOLDAN.

(Specimen of Mr. Ruskin's art criticism; the moral element strongly marked; the style that of his later works, familiar, broken and abrupt, but rising at intervals into high cadences.)

I promised some note of Sandro's Fortitude, before whom I asked you to sit and read the end of my last letter; and I've lost my own notes about her, and forget, now, whether she has a sword, or a mace;—it does not matter. What is chiefly notable in her is—that you would not, if you had to guess who she was, take her for Fortitude at all. Everybody else's Fortitudes announce themselves clearly and proudly. They have tower-like shields, and lion-like helmets—and stand firm astride on their legs—and are confidently ready for all comers.

Yes; that is your common Fortitude. Very grand, though common. But not the highest, by any means.

Ready for all comers, and a match for them—thinks the universal Fortitude—no thanks to her for standing so steady, then!

But Botticelli's Fortitude is no match, it may be, for any that are coming. Worn, somewhat; and not a little weary, instead of standing ready for all comers, she is sitting—apparently in reverie, her fingers playing restlessly and idly—nay, I think—even nervously, about the hilt of her sword.

For her battle is not to begin to-day; nor did it begin yesterday. Many a morn and eve have passed since it began—and now—is this to be the ending day of it? And if this—by what manner of end?

That is what Sandro's Fortitude is thinking. And the playing fingers about the sword-hilt would fain let it fall, if it might be: and yet, how swiftly and gladly will they close on it, when the far-off trumpet blows, which she will hear through all her reverie!

FRONDES AGRESTES.

(Specimen of Mr. Ruskin's descriptive power; latter paragraph in the style of his earlier work, elaborate and somewhat formal in the structure of its sentences, but exquisitely phrased.)

The Swiss have certainly no feelings respecting their mountains in anywise correspondent with ours. It was rather as fortresses of defence than as spectacles of

splendour that the cliffs of the Rothslock bare rule over the destinies of those who dwelt at their feet; and the traiping for which the mountain children had to thank the slopes of the Muotta-Thal, was in soundness of breath, and steadiness of limb, far more than in elevation of idea. But the point which I desire the reader to note is, that the character of the scene which, if any, appears to have been impressive to the inhabitant, is not that which we ourselves feel when we enter the district. It was not from their lakes, nor their cliffs, nor their g'aciers—though these were all peculiarly their possessions—that the three venerable captons received their name. They were not called the States of the Rock, nor the States of the Lake, but the States of the *Forest*. And the one of the three which contains the most touching record of the spiritual power of Swiss religion, in the name of the convent of the "Hill of Angels," has, for its own, none but the sweet childish name of "Under the Woods."

And indeed you may pass under them if, leaving the most sacred spot in Swiss history, the meadow of the Three Fountains, you bid the boatman row southward a little way by the shore of the Bay of Uri. Steepest there on its western side, the walls of its rocks ascend to heaven. Far in the blue of evening, like a great cathedral pavement, lies the lake in its darkness; and you may hear the whisper of innumerable falling waters return from the hollows of the cliff, like the voices of a multitude praying under their breath. From time to time the beat of a wave, slow lifted where the rocks lean over the black depth, dies heavily as the last note of a requiem. Opposite, green with steep grass, and set with chalet villages, the Fron-Alp rises in one solemn glow of pastoral light and peace; and above, against the clouds of twilight, ghostly on the gray precipice, stand, myriad by myriad, the shadowy armies of the Unterwalden pine.

MODERN PAINTERS.

(Specimen of Mr. Ruskin's analytic power in literary criticism; a very good definition of the function of the imagination in description; the analysis of the passage from Milton very keen and sure.)

The unimaginative writer, on the other hand, as he has never pierced to the heart, so he can never touch it; if he has to paint a passion, he remembers the external signs of it, he collects expressions of it from other writers, he searches for similes, he composes, exaggerates, heaps term on term, figure on figure, till we groan beneath the cold, disjointed heap; but it is all faggot and no fire, the life breath is not in it.

I believe it will be found that the entirely unimaginative mind sees nothing of the object it has to dwell upon or describe, and is therefore utterly unable, as it is blind itself, to set anything before the eyes of the reader.

The fancy sees the outside, and is able to give a portrait of the outside, clear, brilliant, and full of detail.

The imagination sees the heart and inner nature, and makes them felt, but is often obscure, mysterious and interrupted, in its giving of outer detail.

Take an instance. A writer with neither imagination nor fancy, describing a fair lip, does not see it, but thinks about it, and about what is said of it, and calls it well-