

vision of the night. What is the meaning of the extraordinary still haze that kills out natural colors, and substitutes for them the mere phantasmagoria of things? The low and wooded hills that here bound the river ought to be green; they are, on the contrary, of a pale opalesque blue and white. The blue sky is faintly obscured; we can only catch glimpses of white villas in these dusky woods; all around is a sort of slumberous, strangely hued mist; and the only definite color visible is the broad pathway of sunlight on the stream, and that is of a deep and ruddy bronze where the ripples flash. We begin to grow oppressed by this strange gloom. Is it not somewhere in this neighborhood that the most 'devilish cantrips' are still performed among the lonely hills, while the low thunder booms, and unearthly figures appear among the rocks? Should we be surprised if a ghostly barge put off from that almost invisible shore, bringing out to us a company of solemn and silent mariners, each with his horn of schnapps, and his hanger, and his ancient beard? Will they invite us to an awful carouse far up in the sombre mountains, while our hair turns slowly gray as we drink, and the immeasurable years go sadly by as we regard their wild faces? 'Bell! Bell!' we cry, 'exorcise these Dutch fiends! Sing us a Christian song! Quick—before the thunder rolls!' And so, in the midst of this dreadful stillness, we hear a sweet and cheerful sound, and our hearts grow light. It is like the ringing of church bells over fields of yellow corn:

'Faintly as tolls the evening chime—'

the sound is low, but it is clear and sweet as the plashing of a fountain—

'Our voices keep tune and our oars keep time.' And, indeed, there are two voices now humming the subdued melody to us—

'Soon as the woods on the shore look dim,  
We'll sing at St. Ann's our parting hymn.'

Surely the mists begin to clear, and the sun is less spectral over those dusky hills? Hendrick Hudson—Vanderdecken—whatever in the devil's name they call you—be off, you and your ghastly crew! We will not shake hands; but we wish you a safe return to your gloomy rocks, and may your barrels of schnapps never be empty! We can see them retire; there is no expression

on their faces; but the black eyes glitter, and they stroke their awful beards. The dark boat crosses the lane of bronzed sunshine; it becomes more and more dusky as it nears the shore; it vanishes into the mist. And what is this now, close at hand?—

'Saint of this green isle, here our prayers—  
Oh, grant us cool heavens and favoring airs!'

Vanderdecken, farewell! There will be solemn laughter in the hills to-night.

But there is no romance about this German ex-lieutenant, who exhibits an unconscionable audacity in talking to any body and every body, not excepting the man at the wheel himself; and of course he has been asking what this strange atmospheric phenomenon meant.

'Ha!' he says, coming along, 'do you know what it is, this strange mist? It is the forests on fire—for miles and miles and miles—away over in New Jersey and in Pennsylvania, and it has been going on for weeks, so that the whole air is filled with the smoke. Do you smell it now? And there is not enough wind to carry it away; no, it lies about here, and you think it is a thunder storm. But it is not always—I mean everywhere; and the captain says there is not any at West Point, which is very good indeed. And it is very beautiful there, every one says; and the hotel is high up on the hill.'

In the meantime this mystical river had been getting broader, until it suddenly presented itself to us in the form of a wide and apparently circular lake, surrounded with mountains, the wooded slopes of which descended abruptly to the shores, and were there lost in a wilderness of rocks and bushes. Do you wonder that Bell called out,

'It is the Holy Loch! Shall we go ashore at Kilmun?'

And then the river narrowed again, and the waters were very green; and of course we bethought ourselves of the Rhine, flowing rapidly along its deep gorge.

Or was it not rather one of the shores of the Lake of Geneva? Look at the picturesque little villas stuck over the rocks, amid the bushes and trees, while the greens seem all the more intense that the sun out there in the west has become a rayless orb of dusky crimson fire—as round and red and