

THE VALLEY OF VISION

A strange fear and sorrow shook my heart. I felt that this mysterious contest was something of immense importance; a secret, ominous strife; a menace to the world.

Then the two figures stood up, marvellously alike in strength and beauty, yet absolutely different in expression and bearing, the one serene and benignant, the other fierce and threatening. The quiet one was still pleading, with a hand laid upon the other's shoulder. But he shook it off, and thrust his companion away with a proud, impatient gesture.

At last I heard him speak.

"I have done with you," he cried. "I do not believe in you. I have no more need of you. I renounce you. I will live without you. Away forever out of my life!"

At this a look of ineffable sorrow and pity came upon the great companion's face.

"You are free," he answered. "I have only besought you, never constrained you. Since you will have it so, I must leave you, now, to yourself."

He rose into the air, still looking downward with wise eyes full of grief and warning, until he vanished in silence beyond the thin clouds.