

by a single cloud, seemed to hang just above the mast-head, divested of its cool blue, and tinged with a copper hue, as disagreeable to the eye as the atmosphere was oppressive to the head, and the situation to the spirits. The sea, unenlivened by a ripple lay in a monotonous level around, reflecting the unpleasant glare from above, and painfully dazzling the sight that sought a rest upon its unaltered surface. Those who had been sea-sick, revived sufficiently to creep forth and contribute their several complainings to the general stock of *ennui*, under an awning that been spread over the quarter deck; while such as had enjoyed the fine free roll of the vessel when borne on the billows' swell, found the uneasy rocking produce on them in turn a degree of sickness. Altogether it was a severe trial of patience; and I felt myself much indebted to two sprightly young whales, who, within no great distance, held their leisurely way for an hour or two, producing a most refreshing effect, at least on my imagination, by the beautiful jet d'eau that each, by his blowing, occasionally produced, and the long track of foam that his progress left on the otherwise unbroken surface of the sea.

It was then that I remarked to a passenger whom we were bringing home after the wreck of his own vessel, 'I wish we were relieved from our present state; I would gladly compound for a severe storm, in place of this tedious calm.' 'You had better,' he replied, 'be careful what wishes you frame; if a storm sprang up, and you knew the dangers of this coast, you would welcome a month's calm to be delivered from its power; it is better to take what God sends, and be thankful for his mercies.' This was language dissimilar from what prevailed among us; and the individual who used it was indeed of a different order of men. He had, as he told me, often been employed to convey missionaries to their destinations, and had reaped a rich blessing in the work. I understood not his meaning, nor could I appreciate the principle that wrought in him. The fruit was apparent, but of the root I knew nothing. Captain C— was by far the most obliging person on board, and the most self-denying in a situation which generally tends to exhibit the selfish character conspicuously.

The calm endured but for a few hours after the remark just recorded. A breeze sprang up which strongly ruffled the ocean, and bore us rapidly towards the mighty rampart of rock which seemed to rise a perpendicular wall from the surface of the sea. It was unbroken, far as the eye could reach, and at the summit jagged and indented into a strange variety of fantastic outlines. Attached to its base I discerned several large bodies of pure white, around which the breakers were dashing, and these I was told were icebergs. One had already broken from its station, and came drifting towards us in all the lustre of its frozen magnificence. It was then nearly evening: dark clouds overspread the western horizon, and the sun was about to sink behind the blackening mass. The orb had assumed the sanguine hue which results from the intervention of a storm-fraught atmosphere, and the rays that streamed upon the iceberg, invested it with a beauty wholly inconceivable by those who have never beheld one of these majestic objects.—That before us was considered very small; it resembled a rock, with fantastic peaks surmounting its bold cliff; and two buildings, which no one could hesitate to call a castle and a church, corresponding as they did in size and outline with those edifices, placed the one on the summit of the rock, the other sheltered at its base. Semi-transparent in most parts, in some clear as crystal, and in others hung with wreaths of snow, some idea may be formed of the aspect of this frozen mass, as it was borne majestically past us on a swelling sea, with its thousand prisms turned to the deep red light that streamed across its course. Bending over the vessel's side, I gave utterance to expressions of the most passionate admiration and delight, adding a fervent wish that it would closely approach our ship for my greater gratification. Captain C—, who was pacing the deck with more than his usual thoughtfulness of look heard me; and once more cautioned me as to the wishes I was ready to frame. He told me that the sternest of the rocks before us was not so dangerous as the unseen base of that fragile iceberg, one touch from which would send us instantly to the bottom: adding that he had himself been most wonderfully preserved with his little crew, by promptly stepping into their boat on the instant his ship struck, from which they saw her go down in less than two minutes from the moment of collision. He concluded by observing that my morning wish was about to be fulfilled; a tempest was rising, and ere midnight we should regretfully recal our dissatisfaction at the innocent calm which preceded it.

The storm was indeed even then commencing, and as night prematurely closed around, the last gleams exhibited those frowning rocks in fearful proximity, while the breakers flung their foam upon the troubled blast, assisting to mark more distinctly the dark rampart against which it was hurled. The swell of the waves became terrible; all save the seamen were ordered to quit the deck: the dead-lights were fixed, and overcome by sickness or by panic the passengers lay down on their berths: all, I believe, but one. Truly can I say, that "I lived a Pharisee," and verily did I believe in myself that I was righteous, and despised others. Like them, I expected death; but probably there was not one among them so perfectly indifferent as to whether it came or no. I went to my little cabin, and finding it impossible to preserve any other seat, I chose the floor for mine, lashed a lantern to one of the posts that supported my berth, firmly twisted my left arm round another, and placing a large Bible on my lap, selected some portions

that seemed most appropriate—not to our own awful situation, on the very verge of eternity, but to the grandeur of the scenery I had enjoyed during the last few hours, and the sublimity inseparable, in the minds of those who are neither sick nor fearful, from the deep roll of the stormy waves, the measured reek of the vessel as they bore her aloft, and then slid from beneath her to overhang her masts, the straining of every timber, and the thundering effect of the roaring blast among her shattered sails. The Bible had never been made a task-book to me: if those who reared me could not teach me to understand, they yet taught me to love it as the most interesting historical, the most sublime of poetical volumes. I chose it then for my companion, partly no doubt from ostentation, but chiefly because every thing else fell so lamentably short of the conceptions of my mind, ever alive to impressions of magnificence.—The forty-sixth Psalm I read again and again, for the sake of its stormy imagery. Next I took the fourteenth of Isaiah, and the sixty-third, as surpassing in grandeur of imagery and diction all that man could invent.

The night was one of extreme peril, and of most wonderful deliverance. The vessel was driving, helpless as a cork on the waters, directly towards the rocks: and when all human effort became unavailing to arrest or to vary her course, a sudden change in the wind drove her out to sea so rapidly, that when morning came, nothing was visible of the threatening coast but a long dark line in the distant horizon, towards which we gradually re-approached, beneath a cloudless sky, with a propitious breeze, that imparted to the ocean what I consider its most beautiful aspect; for, lovely as at all times the great world of waters appeared, it never charmed me so much as when the exquisite depth of blue prevailing in the Atlantic was dappled with the silver foam that crests the myriads of little billows into which the surface is gathered on a breezy sunshiny day. I felt delight, and a measure of thankfulness too.

Much more strongly did I feel the deliverance vouchsafed to others in the course of that day. We had nearly made the exquisitely picturesque mouth of St. John's harbour, and were steering through the multitude of little fishing-boats that people those seas, when one of them came bounding so completely across our track, that no skill either on the part of our steersman or of the two poor fishermen could avert a collision. It was a moment of agony never to be forgotten—literally a moment, for I did not perceive the boat until she was so directly beneath our prow, that the next movement of the rolling ship must decide her fate. Every one who has observed the course of a large sailing-vessel on a rough sea must know that she plunges forward with a mighty sweep, clearing a considerable space with every bound. She was rising for one of these plunges when my eye caught the terrified looks of the poor fishermen, turned upwards to the comparatively gigantic object overhanging their frail bark. I could not avert my gaze—it was fixed in breathless horror on the victims over whom we were about to dash. The next instant saw their little cross-tree and brown sail hanging on the side of our keel, while the boat and its still petrified owners remained, far behind, with a bare mast standing. So close under us had the little bark glided, or rather grated—so wonderfully had the preserving hand of the Lord been outstretched on their behalf. A general cry had arisen from our people; and not a countenance on deck was there unmarked by strong emotion, as all eyes pursued the receding boat, half incredulous of its actual escape. I saw Captain C—, and in his pale cheek, compressed lip, and settled gaze, I read what constrained me also to lift up a grateful heart to the Most High, with an acknowledgment of his work, and his wonders in the great deep.

**Sudden Death.**—It is a remark of the thoughtless, that they would like to pass suddenly from the full enjoyment of life, to death—and we find also a clergyman using the same idea. It appears to us there is a lack of true philosophy in the thought. Whatever may be our state of preparation, we feel that the associations of life, its business and its intercourse, tend to soil our garments, to distract our mind, and lead it off from the great object of human consideration; the lengthened death-sickness enables us to remedy the evil, and set our household in order to look on what we are leaving with that proper estimate of its uses, which enables us rightly to dispose of it, and to consider the relations and tendency of those whom we leave, so that we may properly direct their steps.

To rest on the 'Mountains of Beulah,' and to look beyond the flood, was the privilege of those who had sojourned long and carefully in the right road, according to Bunyan, and the rash foot that splashed aside the water of the divided stream, was not firm when the current set strong.

He who had contemplated long and profitably the slow approach of death, said, imploringly,

"Gently, most gently on thy victim's head,  
Consumption lay thy hand!"

And life itself is little else than a consumption, by which we slide downward from the cradle to the grave. Yet a deeper slope and a greater angle in the descending grade, admonish us we approach the close of our journey, and give intimation for special preparation. He who is conscious (but who is?) of no imperfection, may wish to start upwards, like the perfect prophet, with "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." But in these latter day times, betwixt the flush of life and quenching of its brightness,

moments, at least to say "receive my spirit," were cheaply purchased by a martyr's pangs.

### THE CHOICE.

The Spanish lady sat alone within her evening-bower,  
And, sooth to say, her thoughts were such as suited well the hour;  
For, shining on the myrtle leaves until they shone again,  
The moonlight fell amid the boughs like light and glittering rain.

The ground was strewed with cactus flowers, the fragile and the fair.  
Fit emblems of our early hopes—so perishing they are;  
The jasmine made a starry roof, like some Arabian hall;  
And sweet there floated on the air a distant fountain's fall.

She leant her head upon her hand: "I know not which to choose—  
Alas! which ever choice I make, the other I must lose;  
They say my eyes are like the stars; and if they are so bright,  
Methinks they should be as those stars, and shed o'er all their light.

"Don Felix rides the boldest steed, and bears the stoutest lance,  
And gallantly above his helm his white plumes wave and dance:  
But then Don Guzman, when the night and dews are falling round,  
How sweet beneath my lattice comes his lute's soft number's sound.

"Don Felix has in triumph borne my colours round the ring;  
Three courses for my beauty's sake, he rode before the king.  
Don Guzman he has breathed in song a lover's gentle care—  
And many who know not my face, yet know that it is fair."

The inconstant moon, now bright, now veiled, shone o'er the changing  
tide;

The wind shook down the flowers, but still new flowers their place  
supplied;

And echo'd by some far-off song, the lady's voice was heard—

"Alas! I know not which to choose!" was aye her latest word.

Yet, ere that moon was old, we saw the Donna Julia ride  
Gay on her snowy palfrey, as Don Alonzo's bride.

The bride was young and beautiful, the bridegroom stern and old.  
But the silken rein was hung with pearls, the housings bright with  
gold.

**Sickness.**—In sickness, the soul begins to dress herself for immortality: And first, she unties the strings of vanity, that made her upper garment cleave to the world, and sit uneasy: She puts off the light and fantastic summer-robe of lust and wanton appetite.

Next to this, the soul, by the help of sickness, knocks off the fetters of pride and vainer complacencies. Then she draws the curtains, and stops the light from coming in, and takes the pictures down; those fantastic images of self-love, and gay remembrances of vain opinion and popular noises. Then the spirit stoops into the sobrieties of humble thoughts, and feels corruption chiding the forwardness of fancy, and allaying the vapour of conceit and factious opinions.

Next to these, as the soul is still undressing, she takes off the roughness of her great and little angers and animosities, and receives the oil of mercies and smooth forgiveness, fair interpretations and gentle answers, designs of reconciliation and Christian atonement in their places.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

**THE SPONGE FISHERY.**—When at the Island of Rhodes, I went to the sponge fishery, which is curious and interesting. It is a laborious and dangerous employment, but so lucrative, that five or six successful days afford those engaged in it the means of support an entire year. The sponge is attached to rocks at the bottom of the sea, serving as a retreat to myriads of small crustaceous animals which occupy its cavities. The fishermen dive for it to the depth of even a hundred feet, and sometimes continue for five or six minutes under water, unless the quantity of sponge they may have collected becomes inconvenient or unmanageable, when they are hauled to the surface by the crew of the boat to which they belong. The divers occasionally fall victims to sharks that attack them under water. The sponge is prepared for market by being pressed to dislodge the animalculæ it contains, and afterwards washed in lye to deprive it of mucilaginous matter.—*Mars. Marmont.*

**THE WOODS.**—In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life—no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space—all mean egotism vanishes. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and parcel of God. The name then of the nearest friend sounds foreign and accidental. To be brothers, to be acquaintances—master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of unconfined and immortal beauty. In the wilderness I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.—*Emerson.*