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# **The New Adam and Eve**

**Nathaniel Hawthorne**

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From: Mosses From an Old Manse  
Houghton, Mifflin and Co., Boston, 1893

**MOSSES FROM AN OLD MANSE**

**By Nathaniel Hawthorne**

## THE NEW ADAM AND EVE

We who are born into the world's artificial system can never adequately know how little in our present state and circumstances is natural, and how much is merely the interpolation of the perverted mind and heart of man. Art has become a second and stronger nature; she is a step-mother, whose crafty tenderness has taught us to despise the bountiful and wholesome ministrations of our true parent. It is only through the medium of the imagination that we can lessen those iron fetters, which we call truth and reality, and make ourselves even partially sensible what prisoners we are. For instance, let us conceive good Father Miller's interpretation of the prophecies to have proved true. The Day of Doom has burst upon the globe and swept away the whole race of men. From cities and fields, sea-shore and midland mountain region, vast continents, and even the remotest islands of the ocean, each living thing is gone. No breath of a created being disturbs this earthly atmosphere. But the abodes of man, and all that he has accomplished, the footprints of his wanderings and the results of his toil, the visible symbols of his intellectual cultivation and moral progress,—in short, everything physical that can give evidence of his present position,—shall remain untouched by the hand of destiny. Then, to inherit and repopulate this waste and deserted earth, we will suppose a new Adam and a new Eve to have been created, in the full development of mind and heart, but with no knowledge of their predecessors nor of the diseased circumstances that had become incrusting around them. Such a pair would at once distinguish between art and nature. Their instincts and intuitions would immediately recognize the wisdom and simplicity of the latter; while the former, with its elaborate perversities, would offer them a continual succession of puzzles.

Let us attempt, in a mood half sportive and half thoughtful, to track these imaginary heirs of our mortality, through their first day's experience. No longer ago than yesterday the flame of human life was extinguished; there has been a breathless night; and now another morn approaches, expecting to find the earth no less desolate than at eventide.

It is dawn. The east puts on its immemorial blush, although no human eye is gazing at it; for all the phenomena of the natural world renew themselves, in spite of the solitude that now broods around the globe. There is still beauty of earth, sea, and sky, for beauty's sake. But soon there are to be spectators. Just when the earliest sunshine gilds earth's mountain-tops, two beings have come into life, not in such an Eden as bloomed to welcome our first parents, but in the heart of a modern city. They find themselves in existence, and gazing into one another's eyes. Their emotion is not astonishment; nor do they perplex themselves with efforts to discover what, and whence, and why they are. Each is satisfied to be, because the other exists likewise; and their first consciousness is of calm and mutual enjoyment, which seems not to have been the birth of that very moment, but prolonged from a past eternity. Thus content with an inner sphere which they inhabit together, it is not immediately that the outward world can obtrude itself upon their notice.

Soon, however, they feel the invincible necessity of this earthly life, and begin to make acquaintance with the objects and circumstances that surround them. Perhaps no other

stride so vast remains to be taken as when they first turn from the reality of their mutual glance to the dreams and shadows that perplex them everywhere else.

“Sweetest Eve, where are we?” exclaims the new Adam; for speech, or some equivalent mode of expression, is born with them, and comes just as natural as breath. “Methinks I do not recognize this place.”

“Nor I, dear Man,” replies the new Eve. “And what a strange place, too! Let me come closer to thy side and behold thee only; for all other sights trouble and perplex my spirit.”

“Nay, Eve,” replies Adam, who appears to have the stronger tendency towards the material world; “it were well that we gain some insight into these matters. We are in an odd situation here. Let us look about us.”

Assuredly there are sights enough to throw the new inheritors of earth into a state of hopeless perplexity. The long lines of edifices, their windows glittering in the yellow sunrise, and the narrow street between, with its barren pavement tracked and battered by wheels that have now rattled into an irrevocable past! The signs, with their unintelligible hieroglyphics! The squareness and ugliness, and regular or irregular deformity of everything that meets the eye! The marks of wear and tear, and unrenewed decay, which distinguish the works of man from the growth of nature! What is there in all this, capable of the slightest significance to minds that know nothing of the artificial system which is implied in every lamp-post and each brick of the houses? Moreover, the utter loneliness and silence, in a scene that originally grew out of noise and bustle, must needs impress a feeling of desolation even upon Adam and Eve, unsuspecting as they are of the recent extinction of human existence. In a forest, solitude would be life; in a city, it is death.

The new Eve looks round with a sensation of doubt and distrust, such as a city dame, the daughter of numberless generations of citizens, might experience if suddenly transported to the garden of Eden. At length her downcast eye discovers a small tuft of grass, just beginning to sprout among the stones of the pavement; she eagerly grasps it, and is sensible that this little herb awakens some response within her heart. Nature finds nothing else to offer her. Adam, after staring up and down the street without detecting a single object that his comprehension can lay hold of, finally turns his forehead to the sky. There, indeed, is something which the soul within him recognizes.

“Look up yonder, mine own Eve,” he cries; “surely we ought to dwell among those gold-tinged clouds or in the blue depths beyond them. I know not how nor when, but evidently we have strayed away from our home; for I see nothing hereabouts that seems to belong to us.”

“Can we not ascend thither?” inquires Eve.

“Why not?” answers Adam, hopefully. “But no; something drags us down in spite of our best efforts. Perchance we may find a path hereafter.”

In the energy of new life it appears no such impracticable feat to climb into the sky. But they have already received a woful lesson, which may finally go far towards reducing them to the level of the departed race, when they acknowledge the necessity of keeping the beaten track of earth. They now set forth on a ramble through the city, in the hope of making their escape from this uncongenial sphere. Already in the fresh elasticity of their

spirits they have found the idea of weariness. We will watch them as they enter some of the shops and public or private edifices; for every door, whether of alderman or beggar, church or hall of state, has been flung wide open by the same agency that swept away the inmates.

It so happens,—and not unluckily for an Adam and Eve who are still in the costume that might better have befitted Eden,—it so happens that their first visit is to a fashionable dry-goods store. No courteous and importunate attendants hasten to receive their orders; no throng of ladies are tossing over the rich Parisian fabrics. All is deserted; trade is at a stand-still; and not even an echo of the national watchword, “Go ahead!” disturbs the quiet of the new customers. But specimens of the latest earthly fashions, silks of every shade, and whatever is most delicate or splendid for the decoration of the human form, he scattered around, profusely as bright autumnal leaves in a forest. Adam looks at a few of the articles, but throws them carelessly aside with whatever exclamation may correspond to “Pish!” or “Pshaw!” in the new vocabulary of nature. Eve, however,—be it said without offence to her native modesty,—examines these treasures of her sex with somewhat livelier interest. A pair of corsets chance to be upon the counter; she inspects them curiously, but knows not what to make of them. Then she handles a fashionable silk with dim yearnings, thoughts that wander hither and thither, instincts groping in the dark.

“On the whole, I do not like it,” she observes, laying the glossy fabric upon the counter. “But, Adam, it is very strange. What can these things mean? Surely I ought to know; yet they put me in a perfect maze.”

“Poh! my dear Eve, why trouble thy little head about such nonsense?” cries Adam, in a fit of impatience. “Let us go somewhere else. But stay; how very beautiful! My loveliest Eve, what a charm you have imparted to that robe by merely throwing it over your shoulders!”

For Eve, with the taste that nature moulded into her composition, has taken a remnant of exquisite silver gauze and drawn it around her forms, with an effect that gives Adam his first idea of the witchery of dress. He beholds his spouse in a new light and with renewed admiration; yet is hardly reconciled to any other attire than her own golden locks. However, emulating Eve’s example, he makes free with a mantle of blue velvet, and puts it on so picturesquely that it might seem to have fallen from heaven upon his stately figure. Thus garbed they go in search of new discoveries.

They next wander into a Church, not to make a display of their fine clothes, but attracted by its spire pointing upwards to the sky, whither they have already yearned to climb. As they enter the portal, a clock, which it was the last earthly act of the sexton to wind up, repeats the hour in deep reverberating tones; for Time has survived his former progeny, and, with the iron tongue that man gave him, is now speaking to his two grandchildren. They listen, but understand him not. Nature would measure time by the succession of thoughts and acts which constitute real life, and not by hours of emptiness. They pass up the church-aisle, and raise their eyes to the ceiling. Had our Adam and Eve become mortal in some European city, and strayed into the vastness and sublimity of an old cathedral, they might have recognized the purpose for which the deep-souled founders reared it. Like the dim awfulness of an ancient forest, its very atmosphere would have incited them to prayer. Within the snug walls of a metropolitan church there can be no

such influence.

Yet some odor of religion is still lingering here, the bequest of pious souls, who had grace to enjoy a foretaste of immortal life. Perchance they breathe a prophecy of a better world to their successors, who have become obnoxious to all their own cares and calamities in the present one.

“Eve, something impels me to look upward,” says Adam; “but it troubles me to see this roof between us and the sky. Let us go forth, and perhaps we shall discern a Great Face looking down upon us.”

“Yes; a Great Face, with a beam of love brightening over it, like sunshine,” responds Eve. “Surely we have seen such a countenance somewhere.”

They go out of the church, and kneeling at its threshold give way to the spirit’s natural instinct of adoration towards a beneficent Father. But, in truth, their life thus far has been a continual prayer. Purity and simplicity hold converse at every moment with their Creator.

We now observe them entering a Court of Justice. But what remotest conception can they attain of the purposes of such an edifice? How should the idea occur to them that human brethren, of like nature with themselves, and originally included in the same law of love which is their only rule of life, should ever need an outward enforcement of the true voice within their souls? And what, save a woful experience, the dark result of many centuries, could teach them the sad mysteries of crime? O Judgment Seat, not by the pure in heart vast thou established, nor in the simplicity of nature; but by hard and wrinkled men, and upon the accumulated heap of earthly wrong. Thou art the very symbol of man’s perverted state.

On as fruitless an errand our wanderers next visit a Hall of Legislature, where Adam places Eve in the Speaker’s chair, unconscious of the moral which he thus exemplifies. Man’s intellect, moderated by Woman’s tenderness and moral sense! Were such the legislation of the world there would be no need of State Houses, Capitols, Halls of Parliament, nor even of those little assemblages of patriarchs beneath the shadowy trees, by whom freedom was first interpreted to mankind on our native shores.

Whither go they next? A perverse destiny seems to perplex them with one after another of the riddles which mankind put forth to the wandering universe, and left unsolved in their own destruction. They enter an edifice of stern gray stone standing insulated in the midst of others, and gloomy even in the sunshine, which it barely suffers to penetrate through its iron grated windows. It is a prison. The jailer has left his post at the summons of a stronger authority than the sheriff’s. But the prisoners? Did the messenger of fate, when he shook open all the doors, respect the magistrate’s warrant and the judge’s sentence, and leave the inmates of the dungeons to be delivered by due course of earthly law? No; a new trial has been granted in a higher court, which may set judge, jury, and prisoner at its bar all in a row, and perhaps find one no less guilty than another. The jail, like the whole earth, is now a solitude, and has thereby lost something of its dismal gloom. But here are the narrow cells, like tombs, only drearier and deadlier, because in these the immortal spirit was buried with the body. Inscriptions appear on the walls, scribbled with a pencil or scratched with a rusty nail; brief words of agony, perhaps, or guilt’s desperate defiance to the world, or merely a record of a date by which the writer strove to keep up

with the march of life. There is not a living eye that could now decipher these memorials.

Nor is it while so fresh from their Creator's hand that the new denizens of earth—no, nor their descendants for a thousand years—could discover that this edifice was a hospital for the direst disease which could afflict their predecessors. Its patients bore the outward marks of that leprosy with which all were more or less infected. They were sick—and so were the purest of their brethren—with the plague of sin. A deadly sickness, indeed! Feeling its symptoms within the breast, men concealed it with fear and shame, and were only the more cruel to those unfortunates whose pestiferous sores were flagrant to the common eye. Nothing save a rich garment could ever hide the plague-spot. In the course of the world's lifetime, every remedy was tried for its cure and extirpation, except the single one, the flower that grew in Heaven and was sovereign for all the miseries of earth. Man never had attempted to cure sin by LOVE! Had he but once made the effort, it might well have happened that there would have been no more need of the dark lazarus-house into which Adam and Eve have wandered. Hasten forth with your native innocence, lest the damps of these still conscious walls infect you likewise, and thus another fallen race be propagated!

Passing from the interior of the prison into the space within its outward wall, Adam pauses beneath a structure of the simplest contrivance, yet altogether unaccountable to him. It consists merely of two upright posts, supporting a transverse beam, from which dangles a cord.

"Eve, Eve!" cries Adam, shuddering with a nameless horror. "What can this thing be?"

"I know not," answers Eve; "but, Adam, my heart is sick! There seems to be no more sky,—no more sunshine!"

Well might Adam shudder and poor Eve be sick at heart; for this mysterious object was the type of mankind's whole system in regard to the great difficulties which God had given to be solved,—a system of fear and vengeance, never successful, yet followed to the last. Here, on the morning when the final summons came, a criminal—one criminal, where none were guiltless—had died upon the gallows. Had the world heard the footfall of its own approaching doom, it would have been no inappropriate act thus to close the record of its deeds by one so characteristic.

The two pilgrims now hurry from the prison. Had they known how the former inhabitants of earth were shut up in artificial error and cramped and chained by their perversions, they might have compared the whole moral world to a prison-house, and have deemed the removal of the race a general jail-delivery.

They next enter, unannounced, but they might have rung at the door in vain, a private mansion, one of the stateliest in Beacon Street. A wild and plaintive strain of music is quivering through the house, now rising like a solemn organ-peal, and now dying into the faintest murmur, as if some spirit that had felt an interest in the departed family were bemoaning itself in the solitude of hall and chamber. Perhaps a virgin, the purest of mortal race, has been left behind to perform a requiem for the whole kindred of humanity. Not so. These are the tones of an Eolian harp, through which Nature pours the harmony that lies concealed in her every breath, whether of summer breeze or tempest. Adam and Eve are lost in rapture, unmingled with surprise. The passing wind, that stirred the harp-strings,

has been hushed, before they can think of examining the splendid furniture, the gorgeous carpets, and the architecture of the rooms. These things amuse their unpractised eyes, but appeal to nothing within their hearts. Even the pictures upon the walls scarcely excite a deeper interest; for there is something radically artificial and deceptive in painting with which minds in the primal simplicity cannot sympathize. The unbidden guests examine a row of family portraits, but are too dull to recognize them as men and women, beneath the disguise of a preposterous garb, and with features and expression debased, because inherited through ages of moral and physical decay.

Chance, however, presents them with pictures of human beauty, fresh from the hand of Nature. As they enter a magnificent apartment they are astonished, but not affrighted, to perceive two figures advancing to meet them. Is it not awful to imagine that any life, save their own, should remain in the wide world?

“How is this?” exclaims Adam. “My beautiful Eve, are you in two places at once?”

“And you, Adam!” answers Eve, doubtful, yet delighted. “Surely that noble and lovely form is yours. Yet here you are by my side. I am content with one,—methinks there should not be two.”

This miracle is wrought by a tall looking-glass, the mystery of which they soon fathom, because Nature creates a mirror for the human face in every pool of water, and for her own great features in waveless lakes. Pleased and satisfied with gazing at themselves, they now discover the marble statue of a child in a corner of the room so exquisitely idealized that it is almost worthy to be the prophetic likeness of their first-born. Sculpture, in its highest excellence, is more genuine than painting, and might seem to be evolved from a natural germ, by the same law as a leaf or flower. The statue of the child impresses the solitary pair as if it were a companion; it likewise hints at secrets both of the past and future.

“My husband!” whispers Eve.

“What would you say, dearest Eve?” inquires Adam.

“I wonder if we are alone in the world,” she continues, “with a sense of something like fear at the thought of other inhabitants. This lovely little form! Did it ever breathe? Or is it only the shadow of something real, like our pictures in the mirror?”

“It is strange!” replies Adam, pressing his hand to his brow. “There are mysteries all around us. An idea flits continually before me,—would that I could seize it! Eve, Eve, are we treading in the footsteps of beings that bore a likeness to ourselves? If so, whither are they gone?—and why is their world so unfit for our dwelling-place?”

“Our great Father only knows,” answers Eve. “But something tells me that we shall not always be alone. And how sweet if other beings were to visit us in the shape of this fair image!”

Then they wander through the house, and everywhere find tokens of human life, which now, with the idea recently suggested, excite a deeper curiosity in their bosoms. Woman has here left traces of her delicacy and refinement, and of her gentle labors. Eve ransacks a work-basket and instinctively thrusts the rosy tip of her finger into a thimble. She takes up a piece of embroidery, glowing with mimic flowers, in one of which a fair damsel of the departed race has left her needle. Pity that the Day of Doom should have anticipated the



completion of such a useful task! Eve feels almost conscious of the skill to finish it. A pianoforte has been left open. She flings her hand carelessly over the keys, and strikes out a sudden melody, no less natural than the strains of the AEolian harp, but joyous with the dance of her yet unburdened life. Passing through a dark entry they find a broom behind the door; and Eve, who comprises the whole nature of womanhood, has a dim idea that it is an instrument proper for her hand. In another apartment they behold a canopied bed, and all the appliances of luxurious repose. A heap of forest-leaves would be more to the purpose. They enter the nursery, and are perplexed with the sight of little gowns and caps, tiny slices, and a cradle, amid the drapery of which is still to be seen the impress of a baby's form. Adam slightly notices these trifles; but Eve becomes involved in a fit of mute reflection from which it is hardly possible to rouse her.

By a most unlucky arrangement there was to have been a grand dinner-party in this mansion on the very day when the whole human family, including the invited guests, were summoned to the unknown regions of illimitable space. At the moment of fate, the table was actually spread, and the company on the point of sitting down. Adam and Eve come unbidden to the banquet; it has now been some time cold, but otherwise furnishes them with highly favorable specimens of the gastronomy of their predecessors. But it is difficult to imagine the perplexity of the unperturbed couple, in endeavoring to find proper food for their first meal, at a table where the cultivated appetites of a fashionable party were to have been gratified. Will Nature teach them the mystery of a plate of turtle-soup? Will she embolden them to attack a haunch of venison? Will she initiate them into the merits of a Parisian pasty, imported by the last steamer that ever crossed the Atlantic? Will she not, rather, bid them turn with disgust from fish, fowl, and flesh, which, to their pure nostrils, steam with a loathsome odor of death and corruption?—Food? The bill of fare contains nothing which they recognize as such.

Fortunately, however, the dessert is ready upon a neighboring table. Adam, whose appetite and animal instincts are quicker than those of Eve, discovers this fitting banquet.

“Here, dearest Eve,” he exclaims,—“here is food.”

“Well,” answered she, with the germ of a housewife stirring within her, “we have been so busy to-day, that a picked-up dinner must serve.”

So Eve comes to the table and receives a red-cheeked apple from her husband's hand in requital of her predecessor's fatal gift to our common grandfather. She eats it without sin, and, let us hope, with no disastrous consequences to her future progeny. They make a plentiful, yet temperate, meal of fruit, which, though not gathered in paradise, is legitimately derived from the seeds that were planted there. Their primal appetite is satisfied.

“What shall we drink, Eve?” inquires Adam.

Eve peeps among some bottles and decanters, which, as they contain fluids, she naturally conceives must be proper to quench thirst. But never before did claret, hock, and madeira, of rich and rare perfume, excite such disgust as now.

“Pah!” she exclaims, after smelling at various wines. “What stuff is here? The beings who have gone before us could not have possessed the same nature that we do; for neither their hunger nor thirst were like our own.”

“Pray hand me yonder bottle,” says Adam. “If it be drinkable by any manner of mortal, I must moisten my throat with it.”

After some remonstrances, she takes up a champagne bottle, but is frightened by the sudden explosion of the cork, and drops it upon the floor. There the untasted liquor effervesces. Had they quaffed it they would have experienced that brief delirium whereby, whether excited by moral or physical causes, man sought to recompense himself for the calm, life-long joys which he had lost by his revolt from nature. At length, in a refrigerator, Eve finds a glass pitcher of water, pure, cold, and bright as ever gushed from a fountain among the hills. Both drink; and such refreshment does it bestow, that they question one another if this precious liquid be not identical with the stream of life within them.

“And now,” observes Adam, “we must again try to discover what sort of a world this is, and why we have been sent hither.”

“Why? to love one another,” cries Eve. “Is not that employment enough?”

“Truly is it,” answers Adam, kissing her; “but still—I know not—something tells us there is labor to be done. Perhaps our allotted task is no other than to climb into the sky, which is so much more beautiful than earth.”

“Then would we were there now,” murmurs Eve, “that no task or duty might come between us!”

They leave the hospitable mansion, and we next see them passing down State Street. The clock on the old State House points to high noon, when the Exchange should be in its glory and present the liveliest emblem of what was the sole business of life, as regarded a multitude of the foregone worldlings. It is over now. The Sabbath of eternity has shed its stillness along the street. Not even a newsboy assails the two solitary passers-by with an extra penny-paper from the office of the Times or Mail, containing a full account of yesterday’s terrible catastrophe. Of all the dull times that merchants and speculators have known, this is the very worst; for, so far as they were concerned, creation itself has taken the benefit of the Bankrupt Act. After all, it is a pity. Those mighty capitalists who had just attained the wished-for wealth! Those shrewd men of traffic who had devoted so many years to the most intricate and artificial of sciences, and had barely mastered it when the universal bankruptcy was announced by peal of trumpet! Can they have been so incautious as to provide no currency of the country whither they have gone, nor any bills of exchange, or letters of credit from the needy on earth to the cash-keepers of heaven?

Adam and Eve enter a Bank. Start not, ye whose funds are treasured there! You will never need them now. Call not for the police. The stones of the street and the coin of the vaults are of equal value to this simple pair. Strange sight! They take up the bright gold in handfuls and throw it sportively into the air for the sake of seeing the glittering worthlessness descend again in a shower. They know not that each of those small yellow circles was once a magic spell, potent to sway men’s hearts and mystify their moral sense. Here let them pause in the investigation of the past. They have discovered the mainspring, the life, the very essence of the system that had wrought itself into the vitals of mankind, and choked their original nature in its deadly gripe. Yet how powerless over these young inheritors of earth’s hoarded wealth! And here, too, are huge, packages of back-notes,

those talismanic slips of paper which once had the efficacy to build up enchanted palaces like exhalations, and work all kinds of perilous wonders, yet were themselves but the ghosts of money, the shadows of a shade. How like is this vault to a magician's cave when the all-powerful wand is broken, and the visionary splendor vanished, and the floor strewn with fragments of shattered spells, and lifeless shapes, once animated by demons!

"Everywhere, my dear Eve," observes Adam, "we find heaps of rubbish of one kind or another. Somebody, I am convinced, has taken pains to collect them, but for what purpose? Perhaps, hereafter, we shall be moved to do the like. Can that be our business in the world?"

"O no, no, Adam!" answers Eve. "It would be better to sit down quietly and look upward to the sky."

They leave the Bank, and in good time; for had they tarried later they would probably have encountered some gouty old goblin of a capitalist, whose soul could not long be anywhere save in the vault with his treasure.

Next they drop into a jeweller's shop. They are pleased with the glow of gems; and Adam twines a string of beautiful pearls around the head of Eve, and fastens his own mantle with a magnificent diamond brooch. Eve thanks him, and views herself with delight, in the nearest looking-glass. Shortly afterward, observing a bouquet of roses and other brilliant flowers in a vase of water, she flings away the inestimable pearls, and adorns herself with these lovelier gems of nature. They charm her with sentiment as well as beauty.

"Surely they are living beings," she remarks to Adam.

"I think so," replies Adam, "and they seem to be as little at home in the world as ourselves."

We must not attempt to follow every footstep of these investigators whom their Creator has commissioned to pass unconscious judgment upon the works and ways of the vanished race. By this time, being endowed with quick and accurate perceptions, they begin to understand the purpose of the many things around them. They conjecture, for instance, that the edifices of the city were erected, not by the immediate hand that made the world, but by beings somewhat similar to themselves, for shelter and convenience. But how will they explain the magnificence of one habitation as compared with the squalid misery of another? Through what medium can the idea of servitude enter their minds? When will they comprehend the great and miserable fact—the evidences of which appeal to their senses everywhere—that one portion of earth's lost inhabitants was rolling in luxury while the multitude was toiling for scanty food? A wretched change, indeed, must be wrought in their own hearts ere they can conceive the primal decree of Love to have been so completely abrogated, that a brother should ever want what his brother had. When their intelligence shall have reached so far, Earth's new progeny will have little reason to exult over her old rejected one.

Their wanderings have now brought them into the suburbs of the city. They stand on a grassy brow of a hill at the foot of a granite obelisk which points its great finger upwards, as if the human family had agreed, by a visible symbol of age-long endurance, to offer some high sacrifice of thanksgiving or supplication. The solemn height of the monument,

its deep simplicity, and the absence of any vulgar and practical use, all strengthen its effect upon Adam and Eve, and leave them to interpret it by a purer sentiment than the builders thought of expressing.

“Eve, it is a visible prayer,” observed Adam.

“And we will pray too,” she replies.

Let us pardon these poor children of neither father nor mother for so absurdly mistaking the purport of the memorial which man founded and woman finished on far-famed Bunker Hill. The idea of war is not native to their souls. Nor have they sympathies for the brave defenders of liberty, since oppression is one of their unconjectured mysteries. Could they guess that the green sward on which they stand so peacefully was once strewn with human corpses and purple with their blood, it would equally amaze them that one generation of men should perpetrate such carnage, and that a subsequent generation should triumphantly commemorate it.

With a sense of delight they now stroll across green fields and along the margin of a quiet river. Not to track them too closely, we next find the wanderers entering a Gothic edifice of gray stone, where the bygone world has left whatever it deemed worthy of record, in the rich library of Harvard University.

No student ever yet enjoyed such solitude and silence as now broods within its deep alcoves. Little do the present visitors understand what opportunities are thrown away upon them. Yet Adam looks anxiously at the long rows of volumes, those storied heights of human lore, ascending one above another from floor to ceiling. He takes up a bulky folio. It opens in his hands as if spontaneously to impart the spirit of its author to the yet unworn and untainted intellect of the fresh-created mortal. He stands poring over the regular columns of mystic characters, seemingly in studious mood; for the unintelligible thought upon the page has a mysterious relation to his mind, and makes itself felt as if it were a burden flung upon him. He is even painfully perplexed, and grasps vainly at he knows not what. O Adam, it is too soon, too soon by at least five thousand years, to put on spectacles and bury yourself in the alcoves of a library!

“What can this be?” he murmurs at last. “Eve, methinks nothing is so desirable as to find out the mystery of this big and heavy object with its thousand thin divisions. See! it stares me in the face as if it were about to speak!”

Eve, by a feminine instinct, is dipping into a volume of fashionable poetry, the production certainly the most fortunate of earthly bards, since his lay continues in vogue when all the great masters of the lyre have passed into oblivion. But let not, his ghost be too exultant! The world’s one lady tosses the book upon the floor and laughs merrily at her husband’s abstracted mien.

“My dear Adam,” cries she, “you look pensive and dismal. Do fling down that stupid thing; for even if it should speak it would not be worth attending to. Let us talk with one another, and with the sky, and the green earth, and its trees and flowers. They will teach us better knowledge than we can find here.”

“Well, Eve, perhaps you are right,” replies Adam, with a sort of sigh. “Still I cannot help thinking that the interpretation of the riddles amid which we have been wandering all

day long might here be discovered.”

“It may be better not to seek the interpretation,” persists Eve. “For my part, the air of this place does not suit me. If you love me, come away!”

She prevails, and rescues him from the mysterious perils of the library. Happy influence of woman! Had he lingered there long enough to obtain a clue to its treasures,—as was not impossible, his intellect being of human structure, indeed, but with an untransmitted vigor and acuteness,—had he then and there become a student, the annalist of our poor world would soon have recorded the downfall of a second Adam. The fatal apple of another Tree of knowledge would have been eaten. All the perversions, and sophistries, and false wisdom so aptly mimicking the true,—all the narrow truth, so partial that it becomes more deceptive than falsehood,—all the wrong principles and worse practice, the pernicious examples and mistaken rules of life,—all the specious theories which turn earth into cloudland and men into shadows,—all the sad experience which it took mankind so many ages to accumulate, and from which they never drew a moral for their future guidance, the whole heap of this disastrous lore would have tumbled at once upon Adam’s head. There would have been nothing left for him but to take up the already abortive experiment of life where he had dropped it, and toil onward with it a little farther.

But, blessed in his ignorance, he may still enjoy a new world in our worn-out one. Should he fall short of good, even as far as we did, he has at least the freedom—no worthless one—to make errors for himself. And his literature, when the progress of centuries shall create it, will be no interminably repeated echo of our own poetry and reproduction of the images that were moulded by our great fathers of song and fiction, but a melody never yet heard on earth, and intellectual forms unbreathed upon by our conceptions. Therefore let the dust of ages gather upon the volumes of the library, and in due season the roof of the edifice crumble down upon the whole. When the second Adam’s descendants shall have collected as much rubbish of their own, it will be time enough to dig into our ruins and compare the literary advancement of two independent races.

But we are looking forward too far. It seems to be the vice of those who have a long past behind them. We will return to the new Adam and Eve, who, having no reminiscences save dim and fleeting visions of a pre-existence, are content to live and be happy in the present.

The day is near its close when these pilgrims, who derive their being from no dead progenitors, reach the cemetery of Mount Auburn. With light hearts—for earth and sky now gladden each other with beauty—they tread along the winding paths, among marble pillars, mimic temples, urns, obelisks, and sarcophagi, sometimes pausing to contemplate these fantasies of human growth, and sometimes to admire the flowers wherewith nature converts decay to loveliness. Can Death, in the midst of his old triumphs, make them sensible that they have taken up the heavy burden of mortality which a whole species had thrown down? Dust kindred to their own has never lain in the grave. Will they then recognize, and so soon, that Time and the elements have an indefeasible claim upon their bodies? Not improbably they may. There must have been shadows enough, even amid the primal sunshine of their existence, to suggest the thought of the soul’s incongruity with its circumstances. They have already learned that something is to be thrown aside. The idea

of Death is in them, or not far off. But, were they to choose a symbol for him, it would be the butterfly soaring upward, or the bright angel beckoning them aloft, or the child asleep, with soft dreams visible through her transparent purity.

Such a Child, in whitest marble, they have found among the monuments of Mount Auburn.

“Sweetest Eve,” observes Adam, while hand in hand they contemplate this beautiful object, “yonder sun has left us, and the whole world is fading from our sight. Let us sleep as this lovely little figure is sleeping. Our Father only knows whether what outward things we have possessed to-day are to be snatched from us forever. But should our earthly life be leaving us with the departing light, we need not doubt that another morn will find us somewhere beneath the smile of God. I feel that he has imparted the boon of existence never to be resumed.”

“And no matter where we exist,” replies Eve, “for we shall always be together.”