Again passed awhile, and again went on: "Call love, mistaken for a heroism that shall be life-long, yet early waning into self-sentiment; the inexplicable desire that comes on a man of riper years to end all to some one woman, whose ordinary human kindness and human beauty he has lost, as in all the wilds, to make the object of his desire; or lastly the reasonable longing of a strong and thoughtful man to become the most intimate friend of some one woman, for the very type of the beauty and glory of the world which we love so well,—as we exist in all the exaltation and exaltation of spirit which goes with all this, so we set ourselves in the sorrow which not unseemly goes with it also; remembering those lines of the ancient Greek poet (a quite incomparable memory of one of the many translations of the nineteenth century):

"For this the Gods have fashioned man's grief and evil day
That still for man hereafter might be the tale and the lay.'

Well, well, 'tis likely anyhow that all tales shall be lacking or all sorrowed.'

He was silent for some time, and I would not interrupt him. At last he began again: "But you must know that we of these generations are strong and healthy of body, and live easily; we pass our lives in regular strife with nature. You are all thoughtless, but in all the wilds, at all times, we have been self-preservation. There is no more, in the wilderness, of the immature man, or the older man caught in a trap, we must put up with that, nor are we much agreeable. I wish, if we are conventional sentiment or sentimental—my friend, I am old and perhaps displeased, but at least I think we have cast off some of the follies of the older world.

He paused, as if for some words of mine; but held my peace: then he went on: "At least, if we suffer from the tyranny and fickle-ness of nature or our own want of experience, we neither grudge one another, nor do we suffer under things which we might never have to endure, so it must be: but there need be no pretence of unity when the reality of it is gone: nor do we drive those who well know that they are incapable of it to profess an undying sentiment which they cannot really feel; thus, that as that monotony of venal lust is no longer possible, so also it is no longer needed. Don't misunderstand me. You did not seem shocked when I told you that there were no law-court to enforce contracts of sentiment or passion. It is not the curiosity are men made that perhaps you'll be shocked when I tell you that there is no code of public opinion which takes the place of such courts, which might be as tyrannical and unreasonable as they were. I do not that people don't become two times, doubtless, unfairly. But I do say that there is no unvarying conventional set of rules by which people are judged; no bed of nails on which they must tread: their minds are not cut up before hand; hypocrisies and excommunication which people are forced to pronounce, either from lack of deliberations, or by the unexpressed threat of the lesser idletest if they are lax in their hypocrisy. Are you shocked now?"

"N.—no,—" said I, with some hesitation. "It is all so different.

"At any rate," said he, "one thing I think I can answer for: whatever sentiment there is, it is real—and general; it is not confined to people very specially refined. I am also pretty sure, as I hinted to you just now, that there is not by a great way so much suffering involved in these matters either to men and to women as there used to be. But excuse me for being so prolix on this question! You know you are to be treated as a being of another order, of another species, the unconsidered habit, or by the unexpressed threat of the lesser idletest if they are lax in their hypocrisy. Are you shocked now?"

"Well!" I said, a little bit nettled by his manner.

"Well," said he, "of course you will see that all that is a dead common experience. The men have behaved as the old women to the women over the women, or the women over the men; both of which things took place in those old times. The women do what they can do, and what they like best, and the men are neither jealous of it or injured by it. This is such a commonplace that I am almost ashamed to state it."

I said, "O; and legislation! do they take any part in that?"

"Yes, and legislation. This is very important. I think you must answer to that question till we get on to the subject of legislation. There may be novelties to you in that subject also."

"Very well," I said; "but about this woman question? I saw at the Great House that the women were waiting on the men: that seems a little like reaction, doesn't it?"
Norwegian folk-tale tells how the Man mended the House, or some such title; the result of which mending was that, after various trials, a priest was put in as an experiment. At each corner of the rope the man hung half-way up the chimney, the cow dangling from the roof, which, after the fashion of the country, was of turf and sloping down low to the ground. On the cow, I think. Of course every other mishap would happen to such a superior person as yourself, added, chuckling.

I sat a little uneasy under this dry gib. Indeed, his manner of treating this latter part of the question seemed to me a little disre- gio.

"Come, now, my friend," quoth he, "don't you know that it is a great pleasure to a clever woman to manage a house skilfully, and to do it so that all the little expenses about it are pleased, and are grateful to her? And then you know everybody likes to be ordered about by a pretty woman: why, it is one of the pleasantest forms of flirtation. You are not so old that you cannot remember that. Why, remember what I said.

And the old fellow chuckled again, and at last fairly burst out laughing.

"For me," he said, after a while; "I am not laughing at any- thing you could be thinking of, but at that silly nineteenth century fashion, current amongst rich so-called cultivated people, of ignoring all the steps by which their daily dinner was reached, as matters too low for them to consider. Feeding, the 'literary man,' as we queer animals used to be called, yet I am a pretty good cook myself."

"I know it; I know it.

"Well, then," said he, "I really think you can understand me better than you would seem to, judging by your words and your silence."

Said I: "Perhaps that is so; but putting in practice common sense, I see you are in the minority amongst women of the nineteenth century; don't you remember that some of the 'superior' women wanted to emancipate their sex from the bearing of children?"

[TO BE CONTINUED]

William Morris.