

one knows ; and with it, death means not sad separation, only a beautiful mystery.

“Dear aunt Marjory ! If it should be that our ship drifts into the port of paradise, I hope to take her story with me ; I want to see how much truth there is in it.”

“Poor prince in the fairy tale !” said Sydney St. John, as he turned the page and read on and on to the end of his own last letter.

After this he took the portrait of “Bessie, aged ten,” from the wall, and sat with it in his hand, — sat like one who would never dream, nor wish, nor hope again. He was aroused by the knowledge of a presence in the room. He knew that it was remembering with him the flowers in the great-aunt’s garden, the happy German life, the books, the music, the friends, the favorite walks, the river bank, the boat with the man and the woman bringing their fruit into the city.

The light of the lamp above his head,

with the light of the fire on the hearth, made every object in the room discernible. He could have counted the beads in Roswitha’s rosary, as it hung from the corner of the bookshelf. These things he perceived with his eyes. He could not tell how he perceived the presence ; only that it stood there under the Christmas tree, that it wore neither butterfly wings nor wings long and sweeping. It was simply Elisabeth as he had been accustomed to see her, and so natural seemed the circumstance of her appearance that it caused no feeling of any unusual occurrence.

The presence went as it had come, quietly.

Then the young man rose, kissed the little picture of “Bessie, aged ten,” and hung it again in its place, put out the light of the swinging lamp, and, with a sweet sense of comfort in his heart, left the room.

He was not quite sure whether he had been sleeping or waking. He thought he had been awake.

*Harriet Lewis Bradley.*

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## VENICE.

ONLY a cloud, — far off it seemed to me  
 No habitable city, — when, behold,  
 Came gradual distinctions in the fold  
 Of tremulous vapor shadowing things to be :  
 Forms whether of wave or air rose silently  
 O’er quiet lanes of water, caught the gold  
 Of the Italian sunset, and thus rolled  
 The veil from off the Bride of the Blue Sea.  
 Alas, the irrecoverable dream !  
 Cathedral, palace, all things, all too soon  
 Melted like faces in a troubled stream,  
 And, looking backward over the lagoon,  
 I saw the phantom city faintly gleam  
 As mist blown seaward underneath the moon.

*Samuel V. Cole.*

## TO AN ENGLISH FRIEND.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — You and I have known and liked each other for several years; and as we cannot meet at present, and you, my valued friend, are very numerous, and I cannot write a private letter to the whole of you at once, it seems natural to address you here. I think of you very often, and always with warm regard and gratitude; regard which has sometimes subjected me to blame at home as an Anglomaniac. Beyond all such general sentiments, however, I have a special matter on which to write, yet one which I am afraid will elude my pen in the very act of writing. There is that between us which is as transparent yet as impassable as glass; and I greatly fear that whoever tries to break it will only cut his fingers.

When we talk, we speak the same language, — only we don't, as Dr. Holmes says. (Yes, I will use the present tense.) If we had met for the first time in Siam, you would have known me for an American, and I you for an Englishman, — each by his accent. You laugh at us for talking as if there could be such a thing as an English accent. But you remember, in Shirley, how the North Country woman among you despises the South Country man for his mincing, feeble talk as being less English than his own; and less *Angle* it certainly is. I will not discuss now if my ancestors did not carry off and preserve as pure an English speech as they left with yours, if Shakespeare is not at this hour enjoying his talks with Lowell more than those with Matthew Arnold. But from a difference of speech which you do recognize let me illustrate a difference of thought which I doubt if you do.

A century or more ago, every one who spoke English wrote *emperour*, *errour*, *favour*, *honour*, and a score of such words. Nowadays you drop the *u* in some of these

words; we are apt to drop it in all. Yet you generally deride or scold us for not making precisely the same omissions that you do. Why should we? Is there any clause in the treaty of 1783 that leaves in England the supreme control of the common language? Yet the same perplexity that possesses you as to this point seems to me to hang round you in all your dealings with us. Some of you dislike all of us because we are Americans. Some of you treat some of us very well, and again some of you have a very friendly disposition to our whole nation, and are eager to learn all about us. But it seems to me as if the kindest and best of you fail to understand us; and this failure, which need be no more, leads to real injustice and unkindness. I suppose you have treated me as well as an American can be treated, yet I who write these lines have suffered in my own person unjust and unkind treatment among you which I cannot think you ever would have put on any Englishman of the same social rank, but which you thought could involve you in no censure that you would care for when done to an American. Just so my nation is subjected by you to many pieces of injustice quite inconsistent with your cordial professions in public and private, and quite inconsistent, as I believe, with the way you would treat us if you knew us.

You may say: "Is not this always the case between two nations? Do you understand a Frenchman? Does he comprehend a German, or either of you a Pole?" Of course not; but that, my dear Johnny Bull, is not the specific trouble between you and me. That trouble is, you will not or cannot see at all that your American cousins are a real nation by themselves. If you could once get hold of that idea, you would know us as you never could hope or wish to know