

In the desert all these are single : all these are naked. They are pure and untroubled ; not breaking-up and dissolving by any commingling or communion ; each remains itself and apart, harmonizing indeed with its fellows, but in no wise interfering. The lines of demarcation are crude and harsh ; but softness is incomprehensibly the result. They are immitigable, these eight elements, and together they mitigate immeasurably. The mind that revolts against them is ground down by their persistent careless pressure. It is as when one throws a crystal—say of microcosmic salt—into water : it is eaten silently and rapidly, and is no more ; the water is untroubled always ; its action is like Fate's, infinitely irresistible yet infinitely calm.

So the mind reaches out to think this or to think that ; it is brought back into silence by the eight great facts. The desert wind suffers no obstacle to impede it ; the sun shines invincibly upon the baked earth of the village ; the sand invisibly eats up the oasis, save for a moment where man casts up his earthworks against it. Yet despite this, the spring leaps unexpected from the sand, and no simoon can stifle, nor sun evaporate it ; nor can the immense sterility of the desert conquer life. Look where you will, every dune of sand has its inhabitants—not colonists, but natives of the inhospitable-seeming waste. The moon itself, serenely revolving about earth, changes in appearance, as if to say : " Even so goest thou about the sun. Am I new or full ? Never think it ; that is but the point of view from which thou chancest to regard me. I am but a mirror of sunlight, dark or bright according to the angle of thy gaze. Does the mirror alter ? Is it not always the untroubled silver ? Have not I always one face turned sunward ? Thou but mockest thyself when thou callest me ' The Changeful.' "

With such reflections, perhaps, may come an end to the revolt of the mind against the desert.

For life itself, here in the oasis, is a thing ordered by these elements. Night is for sleep ; there is nothing whereat to wake. There is no artificial light ; no artificial food—literature. There is no choice of meats ; one is always hungry. The desert sauce is hunger, unique as, and better than, the Englishman's one sauce. Having eaten, one must walk ; there is only one place to walk in. There is only one lesson to learn, peace ; only one comment upon the lesson, thanksgiving. Love itself becomes simple as the rest of life. A glance in the Café Maure, a silent agreement with delight, a soft withdrawal to some hollow of the dunes under the stars, where the village is blotted out as though it had never been,