

softened by drifting cloud, and the valley itself, mysteriously dark and alluring, lightened towards its entrance until it opened into the streaming glory."

And then, the city! He must have really but a poor and puny conception of beauty, who, watching the city from the hills, can ignore the poetry, not only of her presence, but of her appearance also. Early morning is one of her best times, when, out of the milky, sunshot mists, house walls begin to gleam, and windows to twinkle as the sun comes up. Black tree-tops, chimneys, spires, stand up clear and "take the morning," trains bear aloft their long streamers of bright vapour, running eastward to the port, south and north to the rest of the Island, and worldward either way; and from farm and factory and little family kitchen, up springs the chimney-smoke that is the city's manifest of human life and of Colonial independence and advance. "Nothing but smoke!" Ah! but smoke is not nothing from up here. One loves to see the sunlight catch, one after another, all these little private and public streamers of energy, as the Heavenly approval may be supposed to shine upon all righteous action, personal or national, and turn it to a thing also of beauty. Or go up into the hills upon some showery morning, when the sky is a congregation of grey vapours, and sudden obliterating showers alternate with bright little bursts of sunshine—and see the city then! Against a lofty and massive background of inky gloom, how coloured it shows, how clean! with all its tints of buff and red and grey refreshed by the rain, and the sudden lovely finger of the sunshine magically illumining whatever it points to, and making rubies of the red roofs, gold roofs of the grey, and a vivid emerald of every lawn . . . Yonder some window sparkles like a diamond, there a wet wall glitters like glass, and against all the smother and unfeatured dinginess beyond, how precious, how engagingly does every bit of detail show up! And when the inevitable shower blots all this spot of brightness out, it does not matter—another is immediately unveiled. The city on a day like this is an unconquerable stronghold of resolute cheerfulness. She is like Hawthorn's Phœbe Pyncheon, in the "House of the Seven Gables," or one of those happy natures which, while still involved in sorrow, are yet susceptible to every touch of consolation; ready to be cheered, quick to catch comfort, accessible and affable to every least beam of light.

But it is at night that the city really shines—shines both figuratively and literally: hangs jewels upon the bosom both of night and of the Plain, and, pictorially, more than vindicates her makers. For at night she becomes a great bouquet of golden flowers; low down in the darkness she spreads a con-

gregation of stars. Her street lamps make lanes of light, her house-lamps a lustrous network of gems. Taller illuminations and lit towers looks like cressets and torches raised on high. The bright-headed trains show like migrating glow-worms, the tram-cars, darting and pausing, are real fire-flies. Whether the view of the city at night is better from above Cashmere or above Clifton, may be debated. Cashmere shows more of the city, Clifton more of the starriness; for there, in addition to almost all the great constellation of Christchurch, the darkness is strewn also with the lesser ones of New Brighton, Redcliffs, and Sumner, man-made galaxies of the ground; and the ferry-boat going north glides like a shooting star across the sea. A moonless night is good, a moonless, starry night the best of all, for then, as you stand on Clifton Spur, the whole world seems paven and ceiled with eyes of friendliness.

But the finest aerial effect the Summit Road can offer is, I suppose, a sunset—a sunset on a nor'west day. From many notes of such, I take the following.

"A thick pall of purple-grey cloud was bent across the western sky from north to south in a long curve, and completely hid the descending sun. Between this characteristic 'arch' and the ranges, ran a long gash of strange, very pure, green-blue; and a surge and curdle of clouds, coppery-gold and silver, was tossed up at the seaward end of it. In the gash itself, some small, sinister-looking clouds, black in colour, and humped like porpoises, lay stirless, and the rest of the sky was of a flaked and feathery soft grey. As the invisible sun sank, towards the gash, the whole fantastic sky-scape began to glow, as with an inner flame. What was silver richened into gold, what was gold deepened and brightened; the porpoise-clouds purpled, the cloud-towers in the east grew rosy, shafts and suffusions of pale light slanted from the sky across the mountains, and presently a passing skirt of radiance raised a dust of gold upon the Plain, far-off. Suddenly, the sun drops, clear and sheer, out of his cloud-pall into the clear sky of the gash. O miracle! O effulgence! The sky is flooded with light, the Plain with gladness. It is as if a great weight of despondency had been lifted off the world. The hillside grasses burn, the city windows sparkle, its walls gleam with the smooth brightness of marble, its red roofs glow! Then the sun sinks lower, and the glory fades . . . fades . . . Wait! Scarcely has the last ray left the earth, than the resurrection of the light begins, and, in the after-glow, colour has a second, and a brighter, birth. First, the grey flakes, ash-coloured, of the sky, turned to strewn rose-petals; on the mountains lay again the glow of dawn, more solemn, however, less triumphal; and myriads of cloud angels, with violet robes and wings of