different to me forever more, was more than I could endure. A sense of frightful cold and darkness came over me, and what I next remember was a murmur of many voices and tread of many feet, and one was trying to extricate the letter from my hand. As I slowly became conscious and my calamity came back to me, I cursed myself, my life, the race, everything but God, and I should have dashed my brains out against the wall but for a sudden feeling that I must expiate her death in my own life. I remember only little of what happened then and for a long time—the funeral and some other incidents, and now I live hating life because I must so work out my punishment and conquer myself. I try to recall our early happy days, but when I begin to paint them, there come one after the other those terrible faces —the white trial of Wrath, and Woe, and Death, and in every solitary moment one or the other is before me. Death only will put them and me to rest.

THE AUTOMATON-EAR.

THE day was hardly different from many another day, though I will likely recall it even when the mist of years has shrouded the past in an undefined hueless cloud. The sunshine came in at my open window. Out of doors it flooded all the land in its warm summer light—the spires of the town and the bare college campus, farther the tall bearded barley and rustling oats, farther still the wild grass and the forest, where the river ran and the blue haze dipped from the sky.

The temptation was greater than I could stand, and taking my book I shut up the "study," as the students called my small apartment, leaving it for one bounded by no walls or ceiling.

The woods rang with the hum and chirp of insects and birds. I threw myself down beneath a tall, broad-spreading tree. Against its moss-covered trunk I could hear the loud tap of the wood-pecker secreted high up among its leaves, and off at the end of a tender young twig a robin trilled, swinging himself to and fro through the checkered sunlight. I never grew weary listening to the changeful voice of the forest and the river, and was hardly conscious of reading until I came upon this paragraph:—

"As a particle of the atmosphere is never lost, so sound is never lost. A strain of music or a simple tone will vibrate in the air forever and ever, decreasing according to a fixed ratio. The diffusion of the agitation extends in all directions, like the waves in a pool, but the ear is unable to detect it beyond a certain point. It is well known that some individuals can distinguish sounds which to others under precisely similar circumstances are wholly lost. Thus the fault is not in the sound itself, but in our organ of hearing, and a tone once in existence is always in existence."

This was nothing new to me. I had read it before, though I had never thought of it particularly; but while I listened to the robin, it seemed singular to know that all the sounds ever uttered, ever born, were floating in the air *now*—all music, every tone, every bird-song —and we, alas! could not hear them.

Suddenly a strange idea shot through my brain—Why not? Ay, *why not hear?* Men had constructed instruments which could magnify to the eye, and—was it possible?—Why not?

I looked up and down the river, but saw neither it nor the sky nor the moss that I touched. Did the woodpecker still tap secreted among the leaves, and the robin sing, and the hum of insects run along the bank as before? I cannot recollect, I cannot recollect anything, only Mother Flinse, the deaf and dumb old crone that occasionally came to beg and sell nuts to the students, was standing in the gateway. I nodded to her as I passed, and walked up her long, slim shadow that lay on the path. It was a strange idea that had come so suddenly into my head and startled me. I hardly dared to think of it, but I could think of nothing else. It could not be possible, and yet—why not?

Over and over in the restless hours of the night I asked myself, I said aloud, Why not? Then I laughed at my folly, and wondered what I was thinking of, and tried to sleep—but if it *could* be done?

The idea clung to me. It forced itself up in class hours and made confusion in the lessons. Some said the professor was ill those two or three days before the vacation; perhaps I was. I scarcely slept; only the one thought grew stronger—Men had done more wonderful things; it certainly was possible, and I would accomplish this grand invention

I would construct the king of all instruments —I would construct an instrument which could catch these faint tones vibrating in the air and render them audible. Yes, and I would labor quietly until it was perfected, or the world might laugh.

The session closed and the college was deserted, save by the few musty students which, even in imagination, one could hardly separate or distinguish from the old books on the library shelves. I could wish for no better opportunity to begin my great work. The first thing would be to prepare for it by a careful study of acoustics, and I buried myself among volumes on the philosophy of sound.

I went down to London and purchased a common ear-trumpet. My own ear was exceedingly acute, and to my great delight I found that, with the aid of the trumpet just as it was, I could distinguish sounds at a much greater distance, and those nearer were magnified in power. I had only to improve upon this instrument; careful study, careful work, careful experiment, and my hopes would undoubtedly be realized.

Back to my old room in the college I went with a complete set of tools. So days and weeks I shut myself in, and every day and every week brought nothing but disappointment. The instrument seemed only to diminish sound rather than increase it, yet still I worked on and vowed I would not grow discouraged.

Hour after hour I sat looking out of my narrow window. The fields of barley and waving oats had been reaped, the wheat too had ripened and gone, but I did not notice. I sprang up with a joyful exclamation—Strange never to have thought of it before! Perhaps I had not spent my time in vain, after all. How could I expect to test my instrument in this close room with only that little window? It should be removed from immediate noises, high up in the open air, where there would be no obstructions. I would never succeed here—but where should I go? It must be some place in which I would never be liable to interruption, for my first object was to be shielded and work in secret.

I scoured the neighborhood for an appropriate spot without success, when it occurred to me that I had heard some one say the old gray church was shut up. This church was situated just beyond the suburbs of the town. It was built of rough stone, mottled and stained by unknown years. The high square tower, covered by thick vines that clung and crept round its base, was the most venerable monument among all the slabs and tombs where it stood sentinel. Only graves deserted and uncared for by the living kept it company. People said the place was too damp for use, and talked of rebuilding, but it had never been done. Now if I could gain access to the tower, that was the very place for my purpose.

I found the doors securely fastened, and walked round and round without discovering any way of entrance; but I made up my mind, if it were possible to get inside of that church I would do it, and without the help of keys. The high windows were not to be thought of; but in the rear of the building, lower down, where the fuel had probably been kept, there was a narrow opening which was boarded across. With very little difficulty I knocked out the planks and crept through. It was a cellar, and, as I had anticipated, the coal receptacle. After feeling around, I found a few rough steps which led to a door that was unlocked and communicated with the passage back of the vestry-room. The tower I wished to explore was situated in the remote corner of the building. I passed on to the church. Its walls were discolored by green mould and blackened where the water had dripped through. The sun, low down in the sky, lit the tall arched windows on the west, and made yellow strips across the long aisles, over the faded pews with their stiff, straight backs, over the chancel rail, over the altar with its somber wood-work; but there was no warmth; only the cheerless glare seemed to penetrate the cold dead atmosphere,—only the cheerless glare without sparkle, without life, came into that voiceless sanctuary where the organ slept. At the right of the vestibule a staircase led to the tower; it ascended to a platform laid on a level with the four windows and a little above the point of the church roof. These four windows were situated one on each side of the tower, running high up, and the lower casement folding inward.

Here was my place. Above the tree-tops, in the free open air, with no obstacle to obstruct the wind, I could work unmolested by people or noise. The fresh breeze that fanned my face was cool and pleasant. An hour ago I had been tired, disappointed, and depressed; but now, buoyant with hope, I was ready to begin work again—work that I was determined to accomplish.

The sun had gone. I did not see the broken slabs and urns in the shadow down below; I did not see the sunken graves and

the rank grass and the briers. I looked over them and saw the gorgeous fringes along the horizon, scarlet and gold and pearl; saw them quiver and brighten to flame, and the white wings of pigeons whirl and circle in the deepening glow.

I closed the windows, and when I had crawled out at the narrow hole, carefully reset the boards just as I had found them. In another day all the tools and books that I considered necessary were safely deposited in the tower. I only intended to make this my workshop, still, of course, occupying my old room in the college.

Here I matured plan after plan. I studied, read, worked, knowing, *feeling* that at last I must succeed; but failure followed failure, and I sank into despondency only to begin again with a kind of desperation. When I went down to London and wandered about, hunting up different metals and hard woods, I never entered a concert-room or an opera-house. Was there not music in store for me, such as no mortal ear had ever heard? *All* the music, every strain that had sounded in the past ages? Ah, I could wait; I would work patiently and wait.

I was laboring now upon a theory that I had not tried heretofore. It was my last resource; if this failed, then—but it would not fail. I resolved not to make any test, not to put it near my ear until it was completed. I discarded all woods and used only the metals which best transmitted sound. Finally it was finished, even to the ivory ear-piece. I held the instrument all ready—I held it and looked eastward and westward and back again. Suddenly all control over the muscles of my hand was gone, it felt like stone; then the strange sensation passed away. I stood up and lifted the trumpet to my ear—What! Silence? No, no—I was faint, my brain was confused, whirling. I would not believe it; I would wait a moment until this dizziness was gone, and then—then I would be able to hear. I was deaf now. I still held the instrument; in my agitation the ivory tip shook off and rolled down rattling on the floor. I gazed at it mechanically as if it had been a pebble; I never thought of replacing it, and mechanically I raised the trumpet a second time to my ear. A crash of discordant sounds, a confused jarring noise broke upon me and I drew back trembling, dismayed. Fool! O fool of fools never to have thought of this, which a child, a dunce would not have overlooked! My great invention was nothing, was worse than nothing, was worse than a failure. I might have known that my instrument would magnify present sounds in the air to such a degree as to make them utterly drown all others, and, clashing together, produce this noise like the heavy rumble of thunder.

The college reopened and I took up my old line of duties, or at least attempted them, for the school had grown distasteful to me. I was restless, moody, and discontented. I tried to forget my disappointment, but the effort was vain.

The spires of the town and the college campus glittered white, the fields of barley and oats were fields of snow, the forest leaves had withered and fallen, and the river slumbered, wrapped in a sheeting of ice. Still I brooded over my failure, and when again the wild grass turned green I no longer cared. I was not the same man that had looked out at the waving grain and the blue haze only a year before. A gloomy despondency had settled upon me, and I grew to hate the students, to hate the college, to hate society. In the first shock of discovered failure I had given up all hope, and the winter passed I knew not how. I never wondered if the trouble could be remedied. Now it suddenly occurred to me, perhaps it was no failure after all. The instrument might be made adjustable, so as to be sensible to faint or severe vibrations at pleasure of the operator, and thus separate the sounds. I remembered how but for the accidental removal of the ivory my instrument perhaps would not have reflected any sound. I would work again and persevere.

I would have resigned my professorship, only it might create suspicion. I knew not that already they viewed me with curious eyes and sober faces. When the session finally closed, they tried to persuade me to leave the college during vacation and travel on the continent. I would feel much fresher, they told me, in the fall. In the fall? Ay, perhaps I might, perhaps I might, and I would not go abroad.

Once more the reapers came unnoticed. My work progressed slowly. Day by day I toiled up in the old church-tower, and night by night I dreamed. In my sleep it often seemed that the instrument was suddenly completed, but before I could raise it to my ear I would always waken with a nervous start. So the feverish time went by, and at last I held it ready for a second trial. Now the instrument was adjustable, and I had also improved it so far as to be able to set it very accurately for any particular period, thus rendering it sensible only to sounds of that

time, all heavier and fainter vibrations being excluded.

I drew it out almost to its limits.

All the maddening doubts that had haunted me like grinning specters died. I felt no tremor, my hand was steady, my pulse-beat regular.

The soft breeze had fallen away. No leaf stirred in the quiet that seemed to await my triumph. Again the crimson splendor of sunset illumined the western sky and made a glory overhead—and the dusk was thickening down below among the mouldering slabs. But that mattered not.

I raised the trumpet to my ear.

Hark!—The hum of mighty hosts! It rose and fell, fainter and more faint; then the murmur of water was heard and lost again, as it swelled and gathered and burst in one grand volume of sound like a hallelujah from myriad lips. Out of the resounding echo, out of the dying cadence a single female voice arose. Clear, pure, rich, it soared above the tumult of the host that hushed itself, a living thing. Higher, sweeter, it seemed to break the fetters of mortality and tremble in sublime adoration before the Infinite. My breath stilled with awe. Was it a spirit-voice—one of the glittering host in the jasper city "that had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it?" And the water, was it the river clear as crystal flowing from the great white throne? But no! The tone now floated out soft, sad, human. There was no sorrowful strain in that nightless land where the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations. The beautiful voice was of the earth and sin-stricken. From the sobbing that mingled with the faint ripple of water it went up once more, ringing gladly, joyfully; it went up inspired with praise to the sky, and—hark! the Hebrew tongue:—

"The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

Then the noise of the multitude swelled again and a clash of music broke forth from innumerable timbrels. I raised my head quickly—it was the song of Miriam after the passage of the Red Sea.

I knew not whether I lived.

I bent my ear eagerly to the instrument again and heard—the soft rustle, the breathing as of a sleeping forest. A plaintive note stole gently out, more solemn and quiet than the chant of the leaves. The mournful lay, forlorn, frightened, trembled on the air like the piteous wail of some wounded creature. Then it grew stronger. Clear, brilliant, it burst in a shower of silver sounds like a whole choir of birds in the glitter of the tropical sunlight. But the mournful wail crept back, and the lonely heart-broken strain was lost, while the leaves still whispered to one another in the midnight.

Like the light of a distant star came to me this song of some nightingale, thousands of years after the bird had mouldered to nothing.

At last my labor had been rewarded. As sound travels in waves and these waves are continually advancing they go round and round the world, therefore I would never hear the same sound over again at the same time, but it passed beyond and another came in its stead.

All night I listened with my ear pressed to the instrument. I heard the polished, well-studied compliments, the rustle of silks, and the quick music of the dance at some banquet. I could almost see the brilliant robes and glittering jewels of the waltzers, and the sheen of light, and the mirrors. But hush! a cry, a stifled moan. Was that at the ——No, the music and the rustle of silk were gone.

"Mother, put your hand here,—I am tired, and my head feels hot and strange. Is it night, already, that it has grown so dark? I am resting now, for my book is almost done, and then, mother, we can go back to the dear old home where the sun shines so bright and the honeysuckles are heavy with perfume. And, mother, we will never be poor any more. I know you are weary, for your cheeks are pale and your fingers are thin; but they shall not touch a needle then, and you will grow better, mother, and we will forget these long, long, bitter years. I will not write in the evenings then, but sit with you and watch the twilight fade as we used to do, and listen to the murmur of the frogs. I described the little stream, our little stream, mother, in my book. —Hark! I hear the splash of its waves now. Hold me by the hand tight, mother. I am tired, but we are almost there. See! the house glimmers white through the trees, and the red bird has built its nest again in the cedar. Put your arm around me, mother, mother—"

Then single, echoless, the mother's piercing cry went up—"O my God!"

Great Heaven! It would not always be music that I should hear. Into this ear, where all the world poured its tales, sorrow and suffering and death would come in turn with mirth and gladness.

I listened again. The long-drawn ahoy—

ahoy—of the sailor rang out in slumbrous musical monotone, now free, now muffled—gone. The gleeful laugh of children at play, then the drunken boisterous shout of the midnight reveler—What was that? A chime of bells, strange, sublime, swimming in the air they made a cold, solemn harmony. But even over them dashed the storm-blast of passion that sweeps continually up and down the earth, and the harmony that bound them in peace broke up in a wild, angry clamor, that set loose shrill screams which were swallowed up in a savage tumult of discord, like a mad carnival of yelling demons. Then, as if terrified by their own fiendish rage, they retreated shivering, remorseful, and hushed themselves in hoarse whispers about the gray belfry. It was the Carillonneur, Matthias Vander Gheyn, playing at Louvain on the first of July, 1745.

Yes, my invention had proved a grand success. I had worked and worked in order to give this instrument to the world; but now when it was finished, strange to say, all my ambition, all my desire for fame left me, and I was anxious only to guard it from discovery, to keep it secret, to keep it more jealously than a miser hoards his gold. An undefinable delight filled my soul that I alone out of all humanity possessed this treasure, this great Ear of the World, for which kings might have given up their thrones. Ah! they dreamed not of the wonders I could relate. It was a keen, intense pleasure to see the public for which I had toiled live on, deaf forever save to the few transient sounds of the moment, while I, their slave, reveled in another world above, beyond theirs. But they should never have this instrument; no, not for kingdoms would I give it up, not for life itself.

It exerted a strange fascination over me, and in my eager desire to preserve my secret a tormenting fear suddenly took possession of me that some one might track me to the tower and discover all. It seemed as if the people looked after me with curious faces as I passed. I went no longer on the main road that led to the church, but, when I left my room, took an opposite direction until out of sight, and then made a circuit across the fields. I lived in a continual fear of betraying myself, so that at night I closed my window and door lest I might talk aloud in my sleep. I could never again bear the irksome duties of my office, and when the college reopened I gave up my situation and took lodgings in town. Still the dread of detection haunted me. Every day I varied my route to the church, and every day the people seemed to stare at me with a more curious gaze. Occasionally some of my old pupils came to visit me, but they appeared constrained in my presence and were soon gone. However, no one seemed to suspect my secret; perhaps all this was merely the work of my imagination, for I had grown watchful and reticent.

I hardly ate or slept. I lived perpetually in the past listening to the echoing song of the Alpine shepherd; the rich, uncultivated soprano of the Southern slave making strange wild melody. I heard grand organ fugues rolling, sweeping over multitudes that kneeled in awe, while a choir of voices broke into a gloria that seemed to sway the great cathedral. The thrilling artistic voices of the far past rang again, making my listening soul tremble in their magnificent harmony. It was music of which we could not dream.

Then suddenly I determined to try the opera once more; perhaps I was prejudiced: I had not been inside of a concert-room for more than a year.

I went down to London. It was just at the opening of the fall season. I could hardly wait that evening until the curtain rose; the orchestra was harsh and discordant, the house hot and disagreeable, the gas painfully bright. My restlessness had acquired a feverish pitch before the prima donna made her appearance. Surely that voice was not the one before which the world bowed! Malibran's song stood out in my memory clearly defined and complete, like a magnificent cathedral of pure marble, with faultless arches and skillfully chiseled carvings, where the minarets rose from wreaths of lilies and vine-leaves cut in bas-relief, and the slender spire shot high, glittering yellow in the upper sunlight, its golden arrow, burning like flame, pointing towards the East. But this prima donna built only a flat, clumsy structure of wood ornamented by gaudily painted lattice. I left the opera amid the deafening applause of the audience with a smile of scorn upon my lips. Poor deluded creatures! they knew nothing of music, they knew not what they were doing.

I went to St. Paul's on the Sabbath. There was no worship in the operatic voluntary sung by hired voices; it did not stir my soul, and their cold hymns did not warm with praise to the Divine Creator, or sway the vast pulseless congregation that came and went without one quickened breath.

All this time I felt a singular, inexpressible pleasure in the consciousness of my great secret, and I hurried back with eager haste. In London I had accidentally met two or

three of my old acquaintances. I was not over glad to see them myself: as I have said, I had grown utterly indifferent to society; but I almost felt ashamed when they offered me every attention within their power, for I had not anticipated it, nor was it deserved on my part. Now, when I returned, everybody in the street stopped to shake hands with me and inquire for my health. At first, although I was surprised at the interest they manifested, I took it merely as the common civility on meeting, but when the question was repeated so particularly by each one, I thought it appeared strange, and asked if they had ever heard to the contrary; no, oh no, they said, but still I was astonished at the unusual care with which they all made the same inquiry. I went up to my room and walked directly to the glass. It was the first time I had consciously looked into a mirror for many weeks. Good Heavens! The mystery was explained now. *I could hardly recognize myself.* At first the shock was so great that I stood gazing, almost petrified. The demon of typhus fever could not have wrought a more terrific change in my face if he had held it in his clutches for months. My hair hung in long straggling locks around my neck. I was thin and fearfully haggard. My eyes, sunken far back in my head, looked out from dark deep hollows; my heavy black eyebrows were knit together by wrinkles that made seams over my forehead; my fleshless cheeks clung tight to the bone, and a bright red spot on either one was half covered by thick beard. I had thought so little about my personal appearance lately that I had utterly neglected my hair, and I wondered now that it had given me no annoyance. I smiled while I still looked at myself. This was the effect of the severe study and loss of sleep, and the excitement under which I had labored for months, yes, for more than a year. I had not been conscious of fatigue, but my work was done now and I would soon regain my usual weight. I submitted myself immediately to the hands of a barber, dressed with considerable care, and took another look in the glass. My face appeared pinched and small since it had been freed from beard. The caverns around my eyes seemed even larger, and the bright color in my cheeks contrasted strangely with the extremely sallow tint of my complexion. I turned away with an uncomfortable feeling, and started on a circuitous route to the church, for I never trusted my instrument in any other place.

It was a sober fall day. Everything looked dreary with that cold, gray, sunless sky stretched overhead. The half-naked trees shivered a little in their seared garments of ragged leaves. Occasionally a cat walked along the fence-top, or stood trembling on three legs. Sometimes a depressed bird suddenly tried to cheer its drooping spirits and uttered a few sharp, discontented chirps. Just in front of me two boys were playing ball on the road-side. As I passed I accidentally caught this sentence:

"They say the professor ain't just right in his head."

For a moment I stood rooted to the ground; then wheeled round and cried out fiercely,

"What did you say?"

"Sir?"

"What was that you said just now?" I repeated still more fiercely.

The terrified boys looked at me an instant, then without answering turned and ran as fast as fright could carry them.

So the mystery now was really explained! It was not sick the people thought me, but crazy. I walked on with a queer feeling and began vaguely to wonder why I had been so savage to those boys. The fact which I had learned so suddenly certainly gave me a shock, but it was nothing to me. What did I care, even if the people did think me crazy? Ah! perhaps if I told my secret they would consider it a desperate case of insanity. But the child's words kept ringing in my ears until an idea flashed upon me more terrifying than death itself. How did I know that I was *not* insane? How did I know but that my great invention might be only an hallucination of my brain? Instantly a whole army of thoughts crowded up like ghostly witnesses to affright me. I had studied myself to a shadow; my pallid face, with the red spots on the checks and the blue hollows around the eyes, came before my mental vision afresh. The fever in my veins told me I was unnaturally excited. I had not slept a sound, dreamless sleep for weeks. Perhaps in the long, long days and nights my brain, like my body, had been over-wrought; perhaps in my eager desire to succeed, in my desperate determination, the power of my will had disordered my mind, and it was all deception: the sounds, the music I had heard, merely the creation of my diseased fancy, and the instrument I had handled useless metal. The very idea was inexpressible torture to me. I could not bear that a single doubt of its reality should exist; but, after once entering my head, how would I ever be able to free myself from distrust? I could not do it; I would be obliged to live

always in uncertainty. It was maddening: now I felt as if I might have struck the child in my rage if I could have found him. Then suddenly it occurred to me for the first time that my invention could easily be tested by some other person. Almost instantly I rejected the thought, for it would compel me to betray my secret, and in my strange infatuation I would rather have destroyed the instrument. But the doubts of my sanity on this subject returned upon me with tenfold strength, and again I thought in despair of the only method left me by which they could ever be settled.

In the first shock, when the unlucky sentence fell upon my ear, I had turned after the boys, and then walked on mechanically towards the town. Now, when I looked up I found myself almost at the college gate. No one was to be seen, only Mother Flinse with her basket on her arm was just raising the latch. Half bewildered, I turned hastily round and bent my steps in the direction of my lodgings, while I absently wondered whether that old woman had stood there ever since, since—when? I did not recollect, but her shadow was long and slim—no, there were no shadows this afternoon; it was sunless. As I reached the stairs leading to my room, my trouble, which I had forgotten for the moment, broke upon me anew. I dragged myself up and sat down utterly overwhelmed. As I have said, I would sooner destroy the instrument than give it to a thankless world; but to endure the torturing doubt of its reality was impossible. Suddenly it occurred to me that Mother Flinse was mute. I might get her to test my invention without fear of betrayal, for she could neither speak nor write, and her signs on this subject, if she attempted to explain, would be altogether unintelligible to others. I sprang up in wild delight, then immediately fell back in my chair with a hoarse laugh—Mother Flinse was *deaf* as well as dumb. I had not remembered that. I sat quietly a moment trying to calm myself and think. Why need this make any difference? The instrument ought to, at least it was possible that it might, remedy loss of hearing. I too was deaf to these sounds in the air that it made audible. They would have to be magnified to a greater degree for her. I might set it for the present and use the full power of the instrument: there certainly would be no harm in trying, at any rate, and if it failed it would prove nothing, if it did not fail it would prove everything. Then a new difficulty presented itself. How could I entice the old woman into the church?

I went back towards the college expecting to find her, but she was nowhere to be seen, and I smiled that only a few moments ago I had wondered if she did not always stand in the gateway. Once, I could not exactly recall the time, I had passed her hut. I remembered distinctly that there was a line full of old ragged clothes stretched across from the fence to a decayed tree, and a bright red flannel petticoat blew and flapped among the blackened branches. It was a miserable frame shanty, set back from the Spring road, about half a mile out of town. There I went in search of her.

The blasted tree stood out in bold relief against the drab sky. There appeared no living thing about the dirty, besmoked hovel except one lean rat, that squatted with quivering nose and stared a moment, then retreated under the loose plank before the door, leaving its smellers visible until I stepped upon the board. I knocked loudly without receiving any reply; then, smiling at the useless ceremony I had performed, pushed it open. The old woman, dressed in her red petticoat and a torn calico frock, with a faded shawl drawn over her head, was standing with her back towards me, picking over a pile of rags. She did not move. I hesitated an instant, then walked in. The moment I put my foot upon the floor she sprang quickly round. At first she remained motionless, with her small, piercing gray eyes fixed upon me, holding a piece of orange-and-black spotted muslin; evidently she recognized me, for, suddenly dropping it, she began a series of, wild gestures, grinning until all the wrinkles of her skinny face converged in the region of her mouth, where a few scattered teeth, long and sharp, gleamed strangely white. A rim of grizzled hair stood out round the edge of the turbaned shawl and set off the withered and watchful countenance of the speechless old crone. The yellow, shriveled skin hung loosely about her slim neck like leather, and her knotted hands were brown and dry as the claws of an eagle.

I went through the motion of sweeping and pointed over my shoulder, making her understand that I wished her to do some cleaning. She drew the seams of her face into a new grimace by way of assent, and, putting the piece of orange-and-black spotted muslin around her shoulders in lieu of a cloak, preceded me out of the door. She started immediately in the direction of the college, and I was obliged to take hold of her before I could attract her attention; then, when I shook my head, she regarded me in surprise, and fell once more into a series of

frantic gesticulations. With considerable trouble I made her comprehend that she was merely to follow me. The old woman was by no means dull, and her small, steel-gray eyes had a singular sharpness about them that is only found in the deaf-mute, where they perform the part of the ear and tongue. As soon as we came in sight of the church she was perfectly satisfied. I walked up to the main entrance, turned the knob and shook it, then suddenly felt in all my pockets, shook the door over, and felt through all my pockets again. This hypocritical pantomime had the desired effect. The old beldam slapped her hands together and poked her lean finger at the hole of the lock, apparently amused that I had forgotten the key. Then of her own accord she went round and tried the other doors, but without success. As we passed the narrow window in the rear I made a violent effort in knocking out the loose boards. The old woman seemed greatly delighted, and when I crawled through willingly followed. I gave her a brush, which fortunately one day I had discovered lying in the vestibule, and left her in the church to dust, while I went up in the tower to prepare and remove from sight all the tools which were scattered about. I put them in a recess and screened it from view by a map of the Holy Land. Then I took my instrument and carefully adjusted it, putting on its utmost power.

In about an hour I went down and motioned to Mother Flinse that I wanted her up stairs. She came directly after me without hesitation, and I felt greatly relieved, for I saw that I would likely have no trouble with the old woman. When we got into the tower she pointed down to the trees and then upward, meaning, I presume, that it was high. I nodded, and taking the instrument placed my ear to it for a moment. A loud blast of music, like a dozen bands playing in concert, almost stunned me. She watched me very attentively, but when I made signs for her to come and try she drew back. I held up the instrument and went through all manner of motions indicating that it would not hurt her, but she only shook her head. I persevered in my endeavor to coax her until she seemed to gain courage and walked up within a few feet of me, then suddenly stopped and stretched out her hands for the instrument. As she did not seem afraid, provided she had it herself, I saw that she took firm hold. In my impatience to know the result of this experiment, I was obliged to repeat my signs again and again before I could prevail upon her to raise it to her ear. Then breathlessly I watched her face, a face I thought which looked as if it might belong to some mummy that had been withering for a thousand years. Suddenly it was convulsed as if by a galvanic shock, then the shriveled features seemed to dilate, and a great light flashed through them, transforming them almost into the radiance of youth; a strange light as of some seraph had taken possession of the wrinkled old frame and looked out at the gray eyes, making them shine with unnatural beauty. No wonder the dumb countenance reflected a brightness inexpressible, for the Spirit of Sound had just alighted with silvery wings upon a silence of seventy years.

A heavy weight fell unconsciously from my breast while I stood almost awed before this face, which was transfigured, as if it might have caught a glimmer of that mystical morn when in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall all be changed.

My instrument had stood the test; it was proved forever. I could no longer cherish any doubts of its reality, and an indescribable peace came into my soul, like a sudden awakening from some frightful dream. I had not noticed the flight of time. A pale shadow hung already over the trees—yes, and under them on the slime-covered stones.—Ay! and a heavier shadow than the coming night was even then gathering unseen its rayless folds. The drab sky had blanched and broken, and the sinking sun poured a fading light through its ragged fissures.

The old woman, as if wrapped in an enchantment, had hardly moved. I tried vainly to catch her attention; she did not even appear conscious of my presence. I walked up and shook her gently by the shoulder, and, pointing to the setting sun, held out my hand for the instrument. She looked at me a moment, with the singular unearthly beauty shining through every feature; then suddenly clutching the trumpet tight between her skinny claws, sprang backward towards the stairs, uttering a sound that was neither human nor animal, that was not a wail or a scream, but it fell upon my ears like some palpable horror. Merciful Heaven! Was that thing yonder a woman? The shriveled, fleshless lips gaped apart, and a small pointed tongue lurked behind five glittering, fang-like teeth. The wild beast had suddenly been developed in the hag. Like a hungry tigress defending its prey, she stood hugging the trumpet to her, glaring at me with stretched neck and green eyes.

A savage fierceness roused within me when I found she would not give up the instrument,

and I rushed at her with hands ready to snatch back the prize I valued more than my life—*or hers;* but, quicker than a hunted animal, she turned and fled with it down the stairs, making the tower ring with the hideous cries of her wordless voice. Swiftly—it seemed as if the danger of losing the trumpet gave me wings to fly in pursuit—I crossed the vestibule. She was not there. Everything was silent, and I darted with fleet steps down the dusky aisle of the church, when suddenly the jarring idiotic sounds broke loose again, echoing up in the organ-pipes and rattling along the galleries. The fiend sprang from behind the altar, faced about an instant with flashing eyes and gleaming teeth, then fled through the vestry-room into the passage. The sight of her was fresh fuel to my rage, and it flamed into a frenzy that seemed to burn the human element out of my soul. When I gained the steps leading into the coal-room she was already in the window, but I cleared the distance at a single bound and caught hold of her clothes as she leaped down. I crawled through, but she clutched the instrument tighter. I could not prize it out of her grasp; and in her ineffectual efforts to free herself from my hold she made loud, grating cries, that seemed to me rang and reverberated all through the forest; but presently they grew smothered, gurgled, then ceased. Her clasp relaxed in a convulsive struggle, and the trumpet was in my possession. It was easily done, for her neck was small and lean, and my hands made a circle strong as a steel band.

The tremor died out of her frame and left it perfectly still. Through the silence I could hear the hiss of a snake in the nettle-weeds, and the flapping wings of some night bird fanned my face as it rushed swiftly through the air in its low flight. The gray twilight had deepened to gloom and the graves seemed to have given up their tenants. The pale monuments stood out like shrouded specters. But all the dead in that churchyard were not under ground, for on the wet grass at my feet there was something stark and stiff, more frightful than any phantom of imagination—something that the daylight would not rob of its ghastly features. It must be put out of sight, yes, it must be hid, to save my invention from discovery. The old hag might be missed, and if she was found here it would ruin me and expose my secret. I placed the trumpet on the window-ledge, and, carrying the grim burden in my arms, plunged into the damp tangle of weeds and grass.

In a lonesome corner far back from the church, in the dense shade of thorn-trees, among the wild brambles where poisonous vines grew, slippery with the mould of forgotten years, unsought, uncared for by any human hand, was a tomb. Its sides were half buried in the tall under-brush, and the long slab had been broken once, for a black fissure ran zigzag across the middle. In my muscles that night there was the strength of two men. I lifted off one-half of the stone and heard the lizards dart startled from their haunt, and felt the spiders crawl. When the stone was replaced it covered more than the lizards or the spiders in the dark space between the narrow walls.

As I have said, the instrument possessed a singular fascination over me. I had grown to love it, not alone as a piece of mechanism for the transmission of sound, but like a *living* thing, and I replaced it in the tower with the same pleasure one feels who has rescued a friend from death. My listening ear never grew weary, but now I drew quickly away. It was not music I heard, or the ripple of water, or the prattle of merry tongues, but the harsh grating cries that had echoed in the church, that had rattled and died out in the forest—that voice which was not a voice. I shivered while I readjusted the instrument; perhaps it was the night wind which chilled me, but the rasping sounds were louder than before. *I could not exclude them.* There was no element of superstition in my nature, and I tried it over again: still I heard them—sometimes sharp, sometimes only a faint rumbling. Had the soul of the deaf-mute come in retribution to haunt me and cry eternally in my instrument? Perhaps on the morrow it would not disturb me, but there was no difference. I could hear only it, though I drew out the trumpet for vibrations hundreds of years old. I had rid myself of the withered wretch who would have stolen my treasure, but now I could not rid myself of her invisible ghost. She had conquered, even through death, and come from the spirit world to gain possession of the prize for which she had given up her life. The instrument was no longer of any value to me, though cherishing a vague hope I compelled myself to listen, even with chattering teeth; for it was a terrible thing to hear these hoarse, naunting cries of the dumb soul—of the soul I had strangled from its body, a soul which I would have killed itself if it were possible. But my hope was vain, and the trumpet had become not only worthless to me, but an absolute horror. Suddenly I determined to destroy it. I turned it over ready to dash it in pieces, but

it cost me a struggle to crush this work of my life, and while I stood irresolute a small green and gold beetle crawled out of it and dropped like a stone to the floor. The insect was an electric flash to me, that dispelled the black gloom through which I had been battling. It had likely fallen into the instrument down in the church-yard, or when I laid it upon the window-sill, and the rasping of its wings, magnified, had produced the sounds which resembled the strange grating noise uttered by the deaf-mute.

Instantly I put the trumpet to my ear. Once more the music of the past surged in. Voices, leaves, water, all murmured to me their changeful melody; every zephyr wafting by was filled with broken but melodious whispers.

Relieved from doubts, relieved from fears and threatening dangers, I slept peacefully, dreamlessly as a child. With a feeling of rest to which I had long been unused, I walked out in the soft clear morning. Everything seemed to have put on new life, for the sky was not gray or sober, and the leaves, if they were brown, trimmed their edges in scarlet, and if many had fallen, the squirrels played among them on the ground. But suddenly the sky and the leaves and the squirrels might have been blotted from existence. I did not see them, but I saw—*I saw Mother Flinse come through the college gateway and walk slowly down the road!*

The large faded shawl pinned across her shoulders nearly covered the red flannel petticoat, and the orange-and-black spotted muslin was wrapped into a turban on her head. Without breathing, almost without feeling, I watched the figure until at the corner it turned out of sight, and a long dark outline on the grass behind it ran into the fence. The shadow! Then it was not a ghost. Had the grave given up its dead? I would see.

At the churchyard the briers tore my face and clothes, but I plunged deeper when the shade thickened under the thorn-trees. There in the corner I stooped to lift the broken slab of a tomb, but all my strength would not move it. As I leaned over, bruising my hands in a vain endeavor to raise it, my eyes fell for an instant on the stone, and with a start I turned quickly and ran to the church; then I stopped—the narrow fissure that cut zigzag across the slab on the tomb was filled with green moss, and this window was nailed up, and hung full of heavy cobwebs.

And my instrument?

Suddenly, while I stood there, some substance in my brain seemed to break up—it was the fetters of monomania which had bound me since that evening long ago, when, by the river in the oak-forest, I had heard the robin trill.

No murder stained my soul: and there, beside the black waves of insanity through which I had passed unharmed, I gave praise to the great Creator—praise silent, but intense as Miriam's song by the sea.

UNATTAINED.

If I could only know—
I, sitting here this weary winter morning,
And watching aimlessly the flakes of snow
That wander through the air in vague forewarning,—

If I were only sure
That you would weep with any real sorrow,
If in their gathered whiteness cold and pure
These flakes should lie upon my grave to-morrow,—

I would not count it sad
To loose my little hold upon you living,
And win in dying what I never had,
And what, alas! you have not for the giving.