Persia, as in England and in our United States, a close acquaintance with an object is apt to reveal so many blemishes, as to counteract the primary impression which a far-away and casual observation produced. This is true in nature, as I am sure every careful observer must have noted.

About a mile south of my home, on the traveled highway at the brow of a hill, is a view to my eye so exquisite, that I always draw rein when riding, and sit for a moment in delighted contemplation. There winds the graceful Merrimack, and along her banks, pastures of living green, dotted here and there with the symmetrical elm and shapely maple.

I descend the long hill, and passing in close proximity to all the aforesaid objects, find that all the picturesqueness and much of the beauty is lost. The practical river is busy turning the mills of factories so small that they have not even the dignity of labor, such as belongs to larger manufactories; the green fields look dusty and coarse, and the highway is welcome, because rapidly traveled.

Nowhere, perhaps, is the principle expressed in the Persian proverb more fitly applied than to the stage. As first seen, what a world of enchantment! What lovely houris—marvels of beauty and grace! How irresistible in all their artless fascinations? What wonderful heroes—Whence come they, these Apollo-like youth, specimens of manly beauty, and of high prowess! with the ruddy cheek and the raven hair? Surely they belong not to this poor every-day world? A few years, or even months later, and alas, how has the fair creation tumbled! The beautiful ladies—the fair heroines—how are they fallen from their high estate—the Juliets and Portias and Imogens, with the painted cheeks and blackened eye-lids, bewigged, unnatural, repulsive!

The stage-struck era is as properly a malady of youth, as is the measles, or the whooping-cough, and as surely recovered from. The symptoms are those of a feverish and romantic nature, and the remedies must be guided by the individual idiosyncrasies. In some cases the disease is acute, when its duration is short, and its termination abrupt.

Such was the case with a friend of mine who, in the romantic epoch, while feasting upon the poems of Moore, Byron, et id omne genus, was violently attacked by the dramatic influenza. For nearly three months he was a nightly visitor at the Temple of Thespia. He lived an unreal life, and adored imaginary things—creations of his own untamed and luxuriant imagination. The world of all beauty and poesy—of fair ladies, and gallant knights—was the mysterious one behind the footlights; all else was commonplace, sordid, and groveling.

But his awakening was sudden, and his cure complete. It was on this wise: we were spending the Holidays with a mutual friend in one of our inland towns. A troupe of distinguished actors was announced to appear in the play of Romeo and Juliet. "Juliet," it appeared, was to my friend the embodiment of all that was enchanting in the female sex. No proper estimate could probably have been made of the amount of money and time he had lavishly thrown away in his efforts to be present at the places distinguished with her presence. But he had never seen her in this, her favorite role. So, favored, as he seemed to himself to be, by fortune, he devoted the morning preceding the play to the selection and purchase of three gigantic bouquets, which should, at successive intervals, and at appropriate places, mark his rapturous appreciation.

The afternoon was occupied in study of the play, and careful conning of the part of Juliet. The hour came, and punctually we were in our places—prominent ones, by the way. I was frequently called upon to express an admiration, failing in which, I was accused of being a "blasé old cynic." Notwithstanding the ungracious nature of my task, I managed, as occasion offered, adroitly to put in a few points which I thought might redound to the future advantage of my neighbor. I believe it was thought to be a success; certainly it ended in enthusiastic applause, and Miss Juliet appeared, smiling her prettiest, and bowing her gracefulest, in acknowledgment.