brier, and the wild-rose sent forth those gifts of fragrance and delight which were not denied even unto me. As I walked slowly behind the hedge, I heard voices on the opposite side; they were the voices of women, and I paused to listen. They spoke of love, and of the qualities which should create it.

“No,” said one,—and the words, couched in a tone of music, thrilled to my heart,—“No; it is not beauty which I require in a lover; it is the mind which can command others, and the passion which should bow that mind unto me. I ask for genius and affection. I ask for nothing more.”

“But,” said the other voice, “you could not love a monster in person, even if he were a miracle of intellect and love?”

“I could,” answered the first speaker, fervently; “if I know my heart, I could. You remember the fable of a girl whom a monster loved? I could have loved that monster.”

And with these words they passed from my hearing. But I stole around, and through a small crevice in the fence beheld the face and form of the speaker, whose words had opened, as it were, a glimpse of heaven into my heart. Her eyes were soft and deep, her hair, parting from her girlish, smooth brow, was of the hue of gold, her aspect was pensive and melancholy, and over the delicate and transparent paleness of her cheek hung the waness, but also the eloquence of thought. To other eyes she might not have been beautiful,—to mine, her face was an angel's. From that hour my resolution was taken. I concealed myself in the wood that bordered her house; I made my home with the wild fox in the cavern and the shade; the daylight passed in dreams and passionate delirium, and at evening I wandered forth to watch afar off her footstep, or creep through the copse unseen to listen to her voice; or through the long and lone night to lie beneath the shadow of the house and fix my soul, watchful as a star, upon the windows of the chamber where she slept. I strewed her walks with the leaves of poetry, and at midnight I made the air audible with the breath of music. In my writings and my songs, whatever in the smooth accents of praise, or the burning language of passion, or the liquid melodies of verse, could awaken her fancy or excite her interest, I attempted. Curses on the attempt! May the hand wither!—may the brain burn!—may the heart shrivel and parch like a leaf that a flame devours, from which the cravings of my ghastly and unnatural love found a channel or an aid! I told her in my verses, in my letters, that I had overheard her confession. I told her that I was a thing which the daylight loathed to look upon; but I told her also that I adored her, and I breathed both my story and her love in the numbers of song, and sung them to the silver chords of my lute with a voice which belied my form, and was not out of harmony with nature. She answered me, and her answer filled the air, that had hitherto been to me a breathing torture, with enchantment and rapture. She repeated that beauty was nothing in her estimation; that to her, all loveliness was in the soul. She told me that one who wrote as I wrote, who felt as I felt, could not be loathsome in her eyes. She told me that she could love me, be my form even more monstrous than I had portrayed it. Fool,—miserable fool that I was, to believe her! So, then, shrouded among the trees, and wrapped from head to foot in a mantle, and safe in the oath by which I had bound her not to seek to penetrate my secret or to behold my form before the hour I myself should appoint had arrived, I held commune with her in the deep nights of summer, and beneath the unconscious stars; and while I unrolled to her earnest spirit the marvels of the mystic world and the glories of wisdom, I mingled with my instruction the pathos and passion of love.

“Go,” said she, one night as we conferred together,—and through the matted trees I saw, though she beheld me not, that her cheek blushed as she spoke,—“Go, and win from others the wonder you have won from me. Go, pour forth your knowledge to the crowd; go gain the glory of fame, the glory which makes man immortal, and then come back and claim me. I will be yours!”