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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

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CHAPTER I.

THE realities of the world are few and small; the illusions many and vast. Not a sense that we possess, and hardly a faculty of the mind, but serves to deceive us; wholly in some cases, and partially in all. Yet, strip nature and life of these deceits, and what would earth become? — what our existence here? See a small fly stepping over the irregularities of a looking-glass and thinking the polished surface but a rough and rugged plain, and we have some idea of what the world would be, if we saw it as perhaps it is.

Amongst the sweetest and most friendly delusions, of all the many, is the landscape-painting of imagination. Love, himself, I believe, does not cheat us more or more pleasantly. Let any traveller ask himself, when he sets eyes upon a scene which he pronounces, at once, most beautiful, how much of the loveliness is added by fancy. It may be a grand, an expansive view, over a wide and varied country; but what is the mind doing while the eye is contemplating it? Peopling it with villages — laying it out in corn-fields and vineyards — filling it with busy life and gay enjoyment; not distinctly, not tangibly; but still the associations rise up in a golden mist, and spread a lustre over all. It may be, on the contrary, a narrower scene: a cottage in a deep glen, with old oaks overshadowing, and the thin blue smoke rising up amongst the green leaves. There too, is imagination busy, with the thoughts of calm retirement from a troublous world, and still, quiet contemplation — the labourer's repose after his labour — the sweet domestic home — the tender joy of tongues and faces loving and beloved.

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