

and ships, and loaves of bread upon them, all of which could, as the artists had intended, be actually recognized. During my sixth year I spelt my way, under the dame, through the Shorter Catechism, the Proverbs, and the New Testament, and then entered upon her highest form, as a member of the Bible class; but all the while the process of acquiring learning had been a dark one, which I slowly mastered, in humble confidence in the awful wisdom of the schoolmistress, not knowing whither it tended; when at once my mind awoke to the meaning of the most delightful of all narratives,—the story of Joseph. Was there ever such a discovery made before! I actually found out for myself, that the art of reading is the art of finding stories in books; and from that moment reading became one of the most delightful of my amusements. I began by getting into a corner on the dismissal of the school, and there conning over to myself the new-found story of Joseph; nor did one perusal serve;—the other Scripture stories followed,—in especial, the story of Samson and the Philistines, of David and Goliath, of the prophets Elijah and Elisha; and after these came the New Testament stories and parables. Assisted by my uncles, too, I began to collect a library in a box of birch-bark about nine inches square, which I found quite large enough to contain a great many immortal works. Jack the Giant-Killer, and Jack and the Bean-Stalk, and the Yellow Dwarf, and Blue Beard, and Sinbad the Sailor, and Beauty and the Beast, and Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp, with several others of resembling character. Those intolerable nuisances the useful-knowledge books had not yet arisen, like tenebrious stars, on the educational horizon, to darken the world, and shed their blighting influence on the opening intellect of the “youthhood;” and so, from my rudimental books,—books that made themselves truly such by their thorough assimilation with the rudimental mind,—I passed on, without being conscious of break or line of division, to books on which the learned are content to write commentaries and dissertations, but which I found to be quite as nice children’s books as any of the others. Old Homer wrote admi-