With what a pretty acknowledgment of dependence on her love, does she answer Pisanio's plans for her future disposition:

> Why, good fellow,
> What shall I do the while? Where bide? How live,
> Or in my life what comfort, when I am
> Dead to my husband?

—which is paralleled, in sentiment and construction, by her reply to Iachimo, in that grandly characteristic scene where he attempts her dishonor by poisoning her ear with foul suspicions of her lord's loyalty:

> Reveng'd!
> How should I be reveng'd? If this be true,
> (As I have such a heart that both mine ears
> Must not in haste abuse,)—if it be true,
> How should I be reveng'd?

We cannot agree with those who deny the possession of jealousy to Imogen; nor can we regard as a blemish in her the possession of just so much as is natural to a woman of sensitive imagination and ardent emotions. To be grandly superior to this most feminine weakness would argue, either that she was endowed with self-esteem so overweening as to preclude to her mind the possibility of a rival, or that she was passionless to indifference—either supposition being absurd in its application to her. We detect a pretty trace of this element in the parting scene with Posthumus:

> *Imo.* Nay, stay a little:
> Were you but riding forth to air yourself,
> Such parting were too petty. Look here, love!
> This diamond was my mother's; take it, heart!
> But keep it till you woo another wife,
> When Imogen is dead.

> *Post.* How! how! another?—
> You gentle gods, give me but this I have,
> And sear up my embracements from a next
> With bonds of death!

—which is plainly but a tender trick to catch his amorous protestations in reply. But she repeats it, and this time with more passionate meaning:

> I did not take my leave of him, but had
> Most pretty things to say. Ere I could tell him
> How I would think on him at certain hours,
> Such thoughts, and such; *or I could make him swear*
> *The shes of Italy should not betray*
> *Mine interest and his honor;* or have charg'd him,
> At the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,
> To encounter me with orisons—for then
> I am in heaven for him; or ere I could
> Give him that parting kiss which I had set
> Betwixt two charming words—comes in my father,
> And, like the tyrannous breathing of the north,
> Shakes all our buds from growing.

This last conceit is superfinely delicate; indeed, the scene throughout shows Imogen almost Juliet-like in her extravagant fancies and highly wrought imaginings.

And again, in her vehement talk with Pisanio, she at once seizes upon the abhorred conclusion to solve the horrible mystery of her lord's injustice:

> * * * * * * * * *
> * * * * * Some jay of Italy,
> Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him.
> Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;
> And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,
> I must be ripp'd:—to pieces with me!

Pisanio essays to comfort her:

> It cannot be,
> But that my master is abus'd:
> Some villain—ay, and singular in his art—
> Hath done you both this cursed injury.
> *Imo.* Some Roman courtezan.

She persistently rejects every other supposition for this one, which is of all the least probable, except to her self-tortured heart.

Imogen, with the single exception of Juliet, must be considered the most beautiful of her sisterhood; throughout the text much pains is taken to scatter passages tending to the establishment of this charming impression. We cannot see her "clothed on" with that "bewildering plenitude of loveliness" with which a more gallant admirer endows her; our idea of her person, photographically fixed, is that of extreme but enchanting delicacy; and this is satisfactorily supported by a careful study of the effect her beauty produces on the beholder. Belarius says of her when, famished, she has entered his cave:

> Stay! come not in!—
> But that it eats our victuals, I should think
> Here were a fairy.
> * * * * * * * *
> By Jupiter, an angel! or if not,
> An earthly paragon!—Behold divineness
> No elder than a boy!

And of like character are several descriptions in the exquisite burial scene:

> *Gui.* Oh sweetest, fairest lily!
> My brother wears thee not one half so well
> As when thou grew'st thyself.

> * * * * * * * * *
> * * * * * Why, he but sleeps:
> If he be gone, he'll make his grave a bed;
> With female fairies will his tomb be haunted,
> And worms will not come to thee.
> *Arv.* With fairest flowers—
> Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele—
> I'll sweeten thy sad grave: Thou shalt not lack
> The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
> The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor
> The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
> Out-sweeten'd not thy breath; the ruddock would,
> With charitable bill, (O bill, sore-shaming
> Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
> Without a monument!) bring thee all this;
> Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
> To winter-ground thy corse.

And in Iachimo's description it is noticeable that, although its luxurious imagery is even oppressive, there is none of the grossness which might be expected from so unscrupulous a libertine; it would seem that the chaste, almost supernatural, loveliness of the sleeping lady had refined him for the time:

> * * * * * * * * * *
> * * * * * Cytherea,
> How bravely thou becom'st thy bed! fresh lily—
> And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!
> But kiss! one kiss!—Rubies unparagon'd,
> How dearly they do 't—'Tis her breathing that
> Perfumes the chamber thus. The flame o' the taper
> Bows toward her, and would underpeep her lids,
> To see the enclosed lights, now canopied
> Under these windows: White and azure, lac'd
> With blue of heaven's own tinct!
> * * * * * * * * *
> * * * * * On her left breast
> A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops

I' the bottom of a cowslip. Here's a voucher,
Stronger than ever law could make!

As to the *ways* of Imogen, there is a pretty suggestiveness in the circumstance of her reading late in bed, and in the matter of her reading:

Imo. What hour is it?
Lady. About midnight, madam.
Imo. I have read three hours then; mine eyes are weak;
Fold down the leaf where I have left. To bed!
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
Iach. * * * She hath been reading late,
The tale of Tereus; here, the leaf's turned down
Where Philomel gave up.