BOOK XXI.

PIERRE IMMATURELY ATTEMPTS A MATURE WORK. TIDINGS FROM THE MEADOWS.

PLINLIMMON.

I.

We are now to behold Pierre permanently lodged in three lofty adjoining chambers of the Apostles. And passing on a little further in time, and overlooking the hundred and one domestic details, of how their internal arrangements were finally put into steady working order; how poor Delly, now giving over the sharper pangs of her grief, found in the lighter occupations of a handmaid and familiar companion to Isabel, the only practical relief from the memories of her miserable past; how Isabel herself in the otherwise occupied hours of Pierre, passed some of her time in mastering the chirographical incoherencies of his manuscripts, with a view to eventually copying them out in a legible hand for the printer; or went below stairs to the rooms of the Millthorpes, and in the modest and amiable society of the three young ladies and their excellent mother, found some little solace for the absence of Pierre; or, when his day's work was done, sat by him in the twilight, and played her mystic guitar till Pierre felt chapter after chapter born of its wondrous suggestiveness; but alas! eternally incapable of being translated into words; for where the deepest words end, there music

begins with its supersensuous and all-confounding intimations.

Disowning now all previous exertions of his mind, and burning in scorn even those fine fruits of a care-free fancy, which, written at Saddle Meadows in the sweet legendary time of Lucy and her love, he had jealously kept from the publishers, as too true and good to be published; renouncing all his foregone self, Pierre was now engaged in a comprehensive compacted work, to whose speedy completion two tremendous motives unitedly impelled;--the burning desire to deliver what he thought to be new, or at least miserably neglected Truth to the world; and the prospective menace of being absolutely penniless, unless by the sale of his book, he could realize money. Swayed to universality of thought by the widely-explosive mental tendencies of the profound events which had lately befallen him, and the unprecedented situation in which he now found himself; and perceiving, by presentiment, that most grand productions of the best human intellects ever are built round a circle, as atolls (i. e. the primitive coral islets which, raising themselves in the depths of profoundest seas, rise funnel-like to the surface, and present there a hoop of white rock, which though on the outside everywhere lashed by the ocean, yet excludes all tempests from the quiet lagoon within), digestively including the whole range of all that can be known or dreamed; Pierre was resolved to give the world a book, which the world should hail with surprise and delight. A varied scope of reading, little suspected by his friends, and randomly acquired by a random but lynx-eyed mind, in the course of the multifarious, incidental, bibliographic encounterings of almost any civilized young

inquirer after Truth; this poured one considerable contributary stream into that bottomless spring of original thought which the occasion and time had caused to burst out in himself. Now he congratulated himself upon all his cursory acquisitions of this sort; ignorant that in reality to a mind bent on producing some thoughtful thing of absolute Truth, all mere reading is apt to prove but an obstacle hard to overcome; and not an accelerator helpingly pushing him along.

While Pierre was thinking that he was entirely transplanted into a new and wonderful element of Beauty and Power, he was, in fact, but in one of the stages of the transition. That ultimate element once fairly gained, then books no more are needed for buoys to our souls; our own strong limbs support us, and we float over all bottomlessnesses with a jeering impunity. He did not see,--or if he did, he could not yet name the true cause for it,--that already, in the incipiency of his work, the heavy unmalleable element of mere book-knowledge would not congenially weld with the wide fluidness and ethereal airiness of spontaneous creative thought. He would climb Parnassus with a pile of folios on his back. He did not see, that it was nothing at all to him, what other men had written; that though Plato was indeed a transcendently great man in himself, yet Plato must not be transcendently great to him (Pierre), so long as he (Pierre himself) would also do something transcendently great. He did not see that there is no such thing as a standard for the creative spirit; that no one great book must ever be separately regarded, and permitted to domineer with its own uniqueness upon the creative mind; but that all existing great works must be federated in

the fancy; and so regarded as a miscellaneous and Pantheistic whole; and then,--without at all dictating to his own mind, or unduly biasing it any way,--thus combined, they would prove simply an exhilarative and provocative to him. He did not see, that even when thus combined, all was but one small mite, compared to the latent infiniteness and inexhaustibility in himself; that all the great books in the world are but the mutilated shadowings-forth of invisible and eternally unembodied images in the soul; so that they are but the mirrors, distortedly reflecting to us our own things; and never mind what the mirror may be, if we would see the object, we must look at the object itself, and not at its reflection.

But, as to the resolute traveler in Switzerland, the Alps do never in one wide and comprehensive sweep, instantaneously reveal their full awfulness of amplitude--their overawing extent of peak crowded on peak, and spur sloping on spur, and chain jammed behind chain, and all their wonderful battalionings of might; so hath heaven wisely ordained, that on first entering into the Switzerland of his soul, man shall not at once perceive its tremendous immensity; lest illy prepared for such an encounter, his spirit should sink and perish in the lowermost snows. Only by judicious degrees, appointed of God, does man come at last to gain his Mont Blanc and take an overtopping view of these Alps; and even then, the tithe is not shown; and far over the invisible Atlantic, the Rocky Mountains and the Andes are yet unbeheld. Appalling is the soul of a man! Better might one be pushed off into the material spaces beyond the uttermost orbit of our sun, than once feel himself fairly afloat in

himself!

But not now to consider these ulterior things, Pierre, though strangely and very newly alive to many before unregarded wonders in the general world; still, had he not as yet procured for himself that enchanter's wand of the soul, which but touching the humblest experiences in one's life, straightway it starts up all eyes, in every one of which are endless significancies. Not yet had he dropped his angle into the well of his childhood, to find what fish might be there; for who dreams to find fish in a well? the running stream of the outer world, there doubtless swim the golden perch and the pickerel! Ten million things were as yet uncovered to Pierre. The old mummy lies buried in cloth on cloth; it takes time to unwrap this Egyptian king. Yet now, forsooth, because Pierre began to see through the first superficiality of the world, he fondly weens he has come to the unlayered substance. But, far as any geologist has yet gone down into the world, it is found to consist of nothing but surface stratified on surface. To its axis, the world being nothing but superinduced superficies. By vast pains we mine into the pyramid; by horrible gropings we come to the central room; with joy we espy the sarcophagus; but we lift the lid--and no body is there!--appallingly vacant as vast is the soul of a man!

II.

He had been engaged some weeks upon his book--in pursuance of his

settled plan avoiding all contact with any of his city-connections or friends, even as in his social downfall they sedulously avoided seeking him out--nor ever once going or sending to the post-office, though it was but a little round the corner from where he was, since having dispatched no letters himself, he expected none; thus isolated from the world, and intent upon his literary enterprise, Pierre had passed some weeks, when verbal tidings came to him, of three most momentous events.

First: his mother was dead.

Second: all Saddle Meadows was become Glen Stanly's.

Third: Glen Stanly was believed to be the suitor of Lucy; who, convalescent from an almost mortal illness, was now dwelling at her mother's house in town.

It was chiefly the first-mentioned of these events which darted a sharp natural anguish into Pierre. No letter had come to him; no smallest ring or memorial been sent him; no slightest mention made of him in the will; and yet it was reported that an inconsolable grief had induced his mother's mortal malady, and driven her at length into insanity, which suddenly terminated in death; and when he first heard of that event, she had been cold in the ground for twenty-five days.

How plainly did all this speak of the equally immense pride and grief of his once magnificent mother; and how agonizedly now did it hint of her

mortally-wounded love for her only and best-beloved Pierre! In vain he reasoned with himself; in vain remonstrated with himself; in vain sought to parade all his stoic arguments to drive off the onslaught of natural passion. Nature prevailed; and with tears that like acid burned and scorched as they flowed, he wept, he raved, at the bitter loss of his parent; whose eyes had been closed by unrelated hands that were hired; but whose heart had been broken, and whose very reason been ruined, by the related hands of her son.

For some interval it almost seemed as if his own heart would snap; his own reason go down. Unendurable grief of a man, when Death itself gives the stab, and then snatches all availments to solacement away. For in the grave is no help, no prayer thither may go, no forgiveness thence come; so that the penitent whose sad victim lies in the ground, for that useless penitent his doom is eternal, and though it be Christmas-day with all Christendom, with him it is Hell-day and an eaten liver forever.

With what marvelous precision and exactitude he now went over in his mind all the minutest details of his old joyous life with his mother at Saddle Meadows. He began with his own toilet in the morning; then his mild stroll into the fields; then his cheerful return to call his mother in her chamber; then the gay breakfast--and so on, and on, all through the sweet day, till mother and son kissed, and with light, loving hearts separated to their beds, to prepare themselves for still another day of affectionate delight. This recalling of innocence and joy in the hour of

remorsefulness and woe; this is as heating red-hot the pincers that tear us. But in this delirium of his soul, Pierre could not define where that line was, which separated the natural grief for the loss of a parent from that other one which was born of compunction. He strove hard to define it, but could not. He tried to cozen himself into believing that all his grief was but natural, or if there existed any other, that must spring--not from the consciousness of having done any possible wrong--but from the pang at what terrible cost the more exalted virtues are gained. Nor did he wholly fail in this endeavor. At last he dismissed his mother's memory into that same profound vault where hitherto had reposed the swooned form of his Lucy. But, as sometimes men are coffined in a trance, being thereby mistaken for dead; so it is possible to bury a tranced grief in the soul, erroneously supposing that it hath no more vitality of suffering. Now, immortal things only can beget immortality. It would almost seem one presumptive argument for the endless duration of the human soul, that it is impossible in time and space to kill any compunction arising from having cruelly injured a departed fellow-being.

Ere he finally committed his mother to the profoundest vault of his soul, fain would he have drawn one poor alleviation from a circumstance, which nevertheless, impartially viewed, seemed equally capable either of soothing or intensifying his grief. His mother's will, which without the least mention of his own name, bequeathed several legacies to her friends, and concluded by leaving all Saddle Meadows and its rent-rolls to Glendinning Stanly; this will bore the date of the day immediately

succeeding his fatal announcement on the landing of the stairs, of his assumed nuptials with Isabel. It plausibly pressed upon him, that as all the evidences of his mother's dying unrelentingness toward him were negative; and the only positive evidence--so to speak--of even that negativeness, was the will which omitted all mention of Pierre; therefore, as that will bore so significant a date, it must needs be most reasonable to conclude, that it was dictated in the not yet subsided transports of his mother's first indignation. But small consolation was this, when he considered the final insanity of his mother; for whence that insanity but from a hate-grief unrelenting, even as his father must have become insane from a sin-grief irreparable? Nor did this remarkable double-doom of his parents wholly fail to impress his mind with presentiments concerning his own fate--his own hereditary liability to madness. Presentiment, I say; but what is a presentiment? how shall you coherently define a presentiment, or how make any thing out of it which is at all lucid, unless you say that a presentiment is but a judgment in disguise? And if a judgment in disguise, and yet possessing this preternaturalness of prophecy, how then shall you escape the fateful conclusion, that you are helplessly held in the six hands of the Sisters? For while still dreading your doom, you foreknow it. Yet how foreknow and dread in one breath, unless with this divine seeming power of prescience, you blend the actual slimy powerlessness of defense?

That his cousin, Glen Stanly, had been chosen by his mother to inherit the domain of the Meadows, was not entirely surprising to Pierre. Not

only had Glen always been a favorite with his mother by reason of his superb person and his congeniality of worldly views with herself, but excepting only Pierre, he was her nearest surviving blood relation; and moreover, in his christian name, bore the hereditary syllables, Glendinning. So that if to any one but Pierre the Meadows must descend, Glen, on these general grounds, seemed the appropriate heir.

But it is not natural for a man, never mind who he may be, to see a noble patrimony, rightfully his, go over to a soul-alien, and that alien once his rival in love, and now his heartless, sneering foe; for so Pierre could not but now argue of Glen; it is not natural for a man to see this without singular emotions of discomfort and hate. Nor in Pierre were these feelings at all soothed by the report of Glen's renewed attentions to Lucy. For there is something in the breast of almost every man, which at bottom takes offense at the attentions of any other man offered to a woman, the hope of whose nuptial love he himself may have discarded. Fain would a man selfishly appropriate all the hearts which have ever in any way confessed themselves his. Besides, in Pierre's case, this resentment was heightened by Glen's previous hypocritical demeanor. For now all his suspicions seemed abundantly verified; and comparing all dates, he inferred that Glen's visit to Europe had only been undertaken to wear off the pang of his rejection by Lucy, a rejection tacitly consequent upon her not denying her affianced relation to Pierre.

But now, under the mask of profound sympathy--in time, ripening into

love--for a most beautiful girl, ruffianly deserted by her betrothed, Glen could afford to be entirely open in his new suit, without at all exposing his old scar to the world. So at least it now seemed to Pierre. Moreover, Glen could now approach Lucy under the most favorable possible auspices. He could approach her as a deeply sympathizing friend, all wishful to assuage her sorrow, but hinting nothing, at present, of any selfish matrimonial intent; by enacting this prudent and unclamorous part, the mere sight of such tranquil, disinterested, but indestructible devotedness, could not but suggest in Lucy's mind, very natural comparisons between Glen and Pierre, most deplorably abasing to the latter. Then, no woman--as it would sometimes seem--no woman is utterly free from the influence of a princely social position in her suitor, especially if he be handsome and young. And Glen would come to her now the master of two immense fortunes, and the heir, by voluntary election, no less than by blood propinquity, to the ancestral bannered hall, and the broad manorial meadows of the Glendinnings. And thus, too, the spirit of Pierre's own mother would seem to press Glen's suit. Indeed, situated now as he was Glen would seem all the finest part of Pierre, without any of Pierre's shame; would almost seem Pierre himself--what Pierre had once been to Lucy. And as in the case of a man who has lost a sweet wife, and who long refuses the least consolation; as this man at last finds a singular solace in the companionship of his wife's sister, who happens to bear a peculiar family resemblance to the dead; and as he, in the end, proposes marriage to this sister, merely from the force of such magical associative influences; so it did not seem wholly out of reason to suppose, that the great manly beauty of Glen, possessing a

strong related similitude to Pierre's, might raise in Lucy's heart associations, which would lead her at least to seek--if she could not find--solace for one now regarded as dead and gone to her forever, in the devotedness of another, who would notwithstanding almost seem as that dead one brought back to life.

Deep, deep, and still deep and deeper must we go, if we would find out the heart of a man; descending into which is as descending a spiral stair in a shaft, without any end, and where that endlessness is only concealed by the spiralness of the stair, and the blackness of the shaft.

As Pierre conjured up this phantom of Glen transformed into the seeming semblance of himself; as he figured it advancing toward Lucy and raising her hand in devotion; an infinite quenchless rage and malice possessed him. Many commingled emotions combined to provoke this storm. But chief of all was something strangely akin to that indefinable detestation which one feels for any impostor who has dared to assume one's own name and aspect in any equivocal or dishonorable affair; an emotion greatly intensified if this impostor be known for a mean villain at bottom, and also, by the freak of nature to be almost the personal duplicate of the man whose identity he assumes. All these and a host of other distressful and resentful fancies now ran through the breast of Pierre. All his Faith-born, enthusiastic, high-wrought, stoic, and philosophic defenses, were now beaten down by this sudden storm of nature in his soul. For there is no faith, and no stoicism, and no philosophy, that a mortal man

can possibly evoke, which will stand the final test of a real impassioned onset of Life and Passion upon him. Then all the fair philosophic or Faith-phantoms that he raised from the mist, slide away and disappear as ghosts at cock-crow. For Faith and philosophy are air, but events are brass. Amidst his gray philosophizings, Life breaks upon a man like a morning.

While this mood was on him, Pierre cursed himself for a heartless villain and an idiot fool;--heartless villain, as the murderer of his mother--idiot fool, because he had thrown away all his felicity; because he had himself, as it were, resigned his noble birthright to a cunning kinsman for a mess of pottage, which now proved all but ashes in his mouth.

Resolved to hide these new, and--as it latently seemed to him--unworthy pangs, from Isabel, as also their cause, he quitted his chamber, intending a long vagabond stroll in the suburbs of the town, to wear off his sharper grief, ere he should again return into her sight.

III.

As Pierre, now hurrying from his chamber, was rapidly passing through one of the higher brick colonnades connecting the ancient building with the modern, there advanced toward him from the direction of the latter, a very plain, composed, manly figure, with a countenance rather pale if

any thing, but quite clear and without wrinkle. Though the brow and the beard, and the steadiness of the head and settledness of the step indicated mature age, yet the blue, bright, but still quiescent eye offered a very striking contrast. In that eye, the gay immortal youth Apollo, seemed enshrined; while on that ivory-throned brow, old Saturn cross-legged sat. The whole countenance of this man, the whole air and look of this man, expressed a cheerful content. Cheerful is the adjective, for it was the contrary of gloom; content--perhaps acquiescence--is the substantive, for it was not Happiness or Delight. But while the personal look and air of this man were thus winning, there was still something latently visible in him which repelled. That something may best be characterized as non-Benevolence. Non-Benevolence seems the best word, for it was neither Malice nor Ill-will; but something passive. To crown all, a certain floating atmosphere seemed to invest and go along with this man. That atmosphere seems only renderable in words by the term Inscrutableness. Though the clothes worn by this man were strictly in accordance with the general style of any unobtrusive gentleman's dress, yet his clothes seemed to disguise this man. One would almost have said, his very face, the apparently natural glance of his very eye disguised this man.

Now, as this person deliberately passed by Pierre, he lifted his hat, gracefully bowed, smiled gently, and passed on. But Pierre was all confusion; he flushed, looked askance, stammered with his hand at his hat to return the courtesy of the other; he seemed thoroughly upset by the mere sight of this hat-lifting, gracefully bowing, gently-smiling,

and most miraculously self-possessed, non-benevolent man.

Now who was this man? This man was Plotinus Plinlimmon. Pierre had read a treatise of his in a stage-coach coming to the city, and had heard him often spoken of by Millthorpe and others as the Grand Master of a certain mystic Society among the Apostles. Whence he came, no one could tell. His surname was Welsh, but he was a Tennesseean by birth. He seemed to have no family or blood ties of any sort. He never was known to work with his hands; never to write with his hands (he would not even write a letter); he never was known to open a book. There were no books in his chamber. Nevertheless, some day or other he must have read books, but that time seemed gone now; as for the sleazy works that went under his name, they were nothing more than his verbal things, taken down at random, and bunglingly methodized by his young disciples.

Finding Plinlimmon thus unfurnished either with books or pen and paper, and imputing it to something like indigence, a foreign scholar, a rich nobleman, who chanced to meet him once, sent him a fine supply of stationery, with a very fine set of volumes,--Cardan, Epictetus, the Book of Mormon, Abraham Tucker, Condorcet and the Zenda-Vesta. But this noble foreign scholar calling next day--perhaps in expectation of some compliment for his great kindness--started aghast at his own package deposited just without the door of Plinlimmon, and with all fastenings untouched.

"Missent," said Plotinus Plinlimmon placidly: "if any thing, I looked

for some choice Curaçoa from a nobleman like you. I should be very happy, my dear Count, to accept a few jugs of choice Curaçoa."

"I thought that the society of which you are the head, excluded all things of that sort"--replied the Count.

"Dear Count, so they do; but Mohammed hath his own dispensation."

"Ah! I see," said the noble scholar archly.

"I am afraid you do not see, dear Count"--said Plinlimmon; and instantly before the eyes of the Count, the inscrutable atmosphere eddied and eddied roundabout this Plotinus Plinlimmon.

His chance brushing encounter in the corridor was the first time that ever Pierre had without medium beheld the form or the face of Plinlimmon. Very early after taking chambers at the Apostles', he had been struck by a steady observant blue-eyed countenance at one of the loftiest windows of the old gray tower, which on the opposite side of the quadrangular space, rose prominently before his own chamber. Only through two panes of glass--his own and the stranger's--had Pierre hitherto beheld that remarkable face of repose,--repose neither divine nor human, nor any thing made up of either or both--but a repose separate and apart--a repose of a face by itself. One adequate look at that face conveyed to most philosophical observers a notion of something not before included in their scheme of the Universe.

Now as to the mild sun, glass is no hindrance at all, but he transmits his light and life through the glass; even so through Pierre's panes did the tower face transmit its strange mystery.

Becoming more and more interested in this face, he had questioned Millthorpe concerning it "Bless your soul"--replied Millthorpe--"that is Plotinus Plinlimmon! our Grand Master, Plotinus Plinlimmon! By gad, you must know Plotinus thoroughly, as I have long done. Come away with me, now, and let me introduce you instanter to Plotinus Plinlimmon."

But Pierre declined; and could not help thinking, that though in all human probability Plotinus well understood Millthorpe, yet Millthorpe could hardly yet have wound himself into Plotinus;--though indeed Plotinus--who at times was capable of assuming a very off-hand, confidential, and simple, sophomorean air--might, for reasons best known to himself, have tacitly pretended to Millthorpe, that he (Millthorpe) had thoroughly wriggled himself into his (Plotinus') innermost soul.

A man will be given a book, and when the donor's back is turned, will carelessly drop it in the first corner; he is not over-anxious to be bothered with the book. But now personally point out to him the author, and ten to one he goes back to the corner, picks up the book, dusts the cover, and very carefully reads that invaluable work. One does not vitally believe in a man till one's own two eyes have beheld him. If then, by the force of peculiar circumstances, Pierre while in the

stage, had formerly been drawn into an attentive perusal of the work on "Chronometricals and Horologicals;" how then was his original interest heightened by catching a subsequent glimpse of the author. But at the first reading, not being able--as he thought--to master the pivot-idea of the pamphlet; and as every incomprehended idea is not only a perplexity but a taunting reproach to one's mind, Pierre had at last ceased studying it altogether; nor consciously troubled himself further about it during the remainder of the journey. But still thinking now it might possibly have been mechanically retained by him, he searched all the pockets of his clothes, but without success. He begged Millthorpe to do his best toward procuring him another copy; but it proved impossible to find one. Plotinus himself could not furnish it.

Among other efforts, Pierre in person had accosted a limping half-deaf old book-stall man, not very far from the Apostles'. "Have you the 'Chronometrics,' my friend?" forgetting the exact title.

"Very bad, very bad!" said the old man, rubbing his back;--"has had the chronic-rheumatics ever so long; what's good for 'em?"

Perceiving his mistake, Pierre replied that he did not know what was the infallible remedy.

"Whist! let me tell ye, then, young 'un," said the old cripple, limping close up to him, and putting his mouth in Pierre's ear--"Never catch 'em!--now's the time, while you're young:--never catch 'em!"

By-and-by the blue-eyed, mystic-mild face in the upper window of the old gray tower began to domineer in a very remarkable manner upon Pierre. When in his moods of peculiar depression and despair; when dark thoughts of his miserable condition would steal over him; and black doubts as to the integrity of his unprecedented course in life would most malignantly suggest themselves; when a thought of the vanity of his deep book would glidingly intrude; if glancing at his closet-window that mystic-mild face met Pierre's; under any of these influences the effect was surprising, and not to be adequately detailed in any possible words.

Vain! vain! vain! said the face to him. Fool! fool! fool! said the face to him. Quit! quit! quit! said the face to him. But when he mentally interrogated the face as to why it thrice said Vain! Fool! Quit! to him; here there was no response. For that face did not respond to any thing. Did I not say before that that face was something separate, and apart; a face by itself? Now, any thing which is thus a thing by itself never responds to any other thing. If to affirm, be to expand one's isolated self; and if to deny, be to contract one's isolated self; then to respond is a suspension of all isolation. Though this face in the tower was so clear and so mild; though the gay youth Apollo was enshrined in that eye, and paternal old Saturn sat cross-legged on that ivory brow; yet somehow to Pierre the face at last wore a sort of malicious leer to him. But the Kantists might say, that this was a subjective sort of leer in Pierre. Any way, the face seemed to leer upon Pierre. And now it said to him--Ass! ass! ass! This expression was insufferable. He

procured some muslin for his closet-window; and the face became curtained like any portrait. But this did not mend the leer. Pierre knew that still the face leered behind the muslin. What was most terrible was the idea that by some magical means or other the face had got hold of his secret. "Ay," shuddered Pierre, "the face knows that Isabel is not my wife! And that seems the reason it leers."

Then would all manner of wild fancyings float through his soul, and detached sentences of the "Chronometrics" would vividly recur to him--sentences before but imperfectly comprehended, but now shedding a strange, baleful light upon his peculiar condition, and emphatically denouncing it. Again he tried his best to procure the pamphlet, to read it now by the commentary of the mystic-mild face; again he searched through the pockets of his clothes for the stage-coach copy, but in vain.

And when--at the critical moment of quitting his chambers that morning of the receipt of the fatal tidings--the face itself--the man himself--this inscrutable Plotinus Plinlimmon himself--did visibly brush by him in the brick corridor, and all the trepidation he had ever before felt at the mild-mystic aspect in the tower window, now redoubled upon him, so that, as before said, he flushed, looked askance, and stammered with his saluting hand to his hat;--then anew did there burn in him the desire of procuring the pamphlet. "Cursed fate that I should have lost it"--he cried;--"more cursed, that when I did have it, and did read it, I was such a ninny as not to comprehend; and now it is all too late!"

Yet--to anticipate here--when years after, an old Jew Clothesman rummaged over a surtout of Pierre's--which by some means had come into his hands--his lynx-like fingers happened to feel something foreign between the cloth and the heavy quilted bombazine lining. He ripped open the skirt, and found several old pamphlet pages, soft and worn almost to tissue, but still legible enough to reveal the title--"Chronometricals and Horologicals." Pierre must have ignorantly thrust it into his pocket, in the stage, and it had worked through a rent there, and worked its way clean down into the skirt, and there helped pad the padding. So that all the time he was hunting for this pamphlet, he himself was wearing the pamphlet. When he brushed past Plinlimmon in the brick corridor, and felt that renewed intense longing for the pamphlet, then his right hand was not two inches from the pamphlet.

Possibly this curious circumstance may in some sort illustrate his self-supposed non-understanding of the pamphlet, as first read by him

in the stage. Could he likewise have carried about with him in his mind the thorough understanding of the book, and yet not be aware that he so understood it? I think that--regarded in one light--the final career of Pierre will seem to show, that he did understand it. And here it may be randomly suggested, by way of bagatelle, whether some things that men think they do not know, are not for all that thoroughly comprehended by them; and yet, so to speak, though contained in themselves, are kept a secret from themselves? The idea of Death seems such a thing.