

BOOK XXV.

LUCY, ISABEL, AND PIERRE. PIERRE AT HIS BOOK. ENCELADUS.

I.

A day or two after the arrival of Lucy, when she had quite recovered from any possible ill-effects of recent events,--events conveying such a shock to both Pierre and Isabel,--though to each in a quite different way,--but not, apparently, at least, moving Lucy so intensely--as they were all three sitting at coffee, Lucy expressed her intention to practice her crayon art professionally. It would be so pleasant an employment for her, besides contributing to their common fund. Pierre well knew her expertness in catching likenesses, and judiciously and truthfully beautifying them; not by altering the features so much, as by steeping them in a beautifying atmosphere. For even so, said Lucy, thrown into the Lagoon, and there beheld--as I have heard--the roughest stones, without transformation, put on the softest aspects. If Pierre would only take a little trouble to bring sitters to her room, she doubted not a fine harvest of heads might easily be secured. Certainly, among the numerous inmates of the old Church, Pierre must know many who would have no objections to being sketched. Moreover, though as yet she had had small opportunity to see them; yet among such a remarkable company of poets, philosophers, and mystics of all sorts, there must be some striking heads. In conclusion, she expressed her satisfaction at

the chamber prepared for her, inasmuch as having been formerly the studio of an artist, one window had been considerably elevated, while by a singular arrangement of the interior shutters, the light could in any direction be thrown about at will.

Already Pierre had anticipated something of this sort; the first sight of the easel having suggested it to him. His reply was therefore not wholly unconsidered. He said, that so far as she herself was concerned, the systematic practice of her art at present would certainly be a great advantage in supplying her with a very delightful occupation. But since she could hardly hope for any patronage from her mother's fashionable and wealthy associates; indeed, as such a thing must be very far from her own desires; and as it was only from the Apostles she could--for some time to come, at least--reasonably anticipate sitters; and as those Apostles were almost universally a very forlorn and penniless set--though in truth there were some wonderfully rich-looking heads among them--therefore, Lucy must not look for much immediate pecuniary emolument. Ere long she might indeed do something very handsome; but at the outset, it was well to be moderate in her expectations. This admonishment came, modifiedly, from that certain stoic, dogged mood of Pierre, born of his recent life, which taught him never to expect any good from any thing; but always to anticipate ill; however not in unreadiness to meet the contrary; and then, if good came, so much the better. He added that he would that very morning go among the rooms and corridors of the Apostles, familiarly announcing that his cousin, a lady-artist in crayons, occupied a room adjoining his, where she would

be very happy to receive any sitters.

"And now, Lucy, what shall be the terms? That is a very important point, thou knowest."

"I suppose, Pierre, they must be very low," said Lucy, looking at him meditatively.

"Very low, Lucy; very low, indeed."

"Well, ten dollars, then."

"Ten Banks of England, Lucy!" exclaimed Pierre. "Why, Lucy, that were almost a quarter's income for some of the Apostles!"

"Four dollars, Pierre."

"I will tell thee now, Lucy--but first, how long does it take to complete one portrait?"

"Two sittings; and two mornings' work by myself, Pierre."

"And let me see; what are thy materials? They are not very costly, I believe. 'Tis not like cutting glass,--thy tools must not be pointed with diamonds, Lucy?"

"See, Pierre!" said Lucy, holding out her little palm, "see; this handful of charcoal, a bit of bread, a crayon or two, and a square of paper:--that is all."

"Well, then, thou shalt charge one-seventy-five for a portrait."

"Only one-seventy-five, Pierre?"

"I am half afraid now we have set it far too high, Lucy. Thou must not be extravagant. Look: if thy terms were ten dollars, and thou didst crayon on trust; then thou wouldst have plenty of sitters, but small returns. But if thou puttest thy terms right-down, and also sayest thou must have thy cash right-down too--don't start so at that cash--then not so many sitters to be sure, but more returns. Thou understandest."

"It shall be just as thou say'st, Pierre."

"Well, then, I will write a card for thee, stating thy terms; and put it up conspicuously in thy room, so that every Apostle may know what he has to expect."

"Thank thee, thank thee, cousin Pierre," said Lucy, rising. "I rejoice at thy pleasant and not entirely unhopeful view of my poor little plan. But I must be doing something; I must be earning money. See, I have eaten ever so much bread this morning, but have not earned one penny."

With a humorous sadness Pierre measured the large remainder of the one only piece she had touched, and then would have spoken banteringly to her; but she had slid away into her own room.

He was presently roused from the strange revery into which the conclusion of this scene had thrown him, by the touch of Isabel's hand upon his knee, and her large expressive glance upon his face. During all the foregoing colloquy, she had remained entirely silent; but an unoccupied observer would perhaps have noticed, that some new and very strong emotions were restrainedly stirring within her.

"Pierre!" she said, intently bending over toward him.

"Well, well, Isabel," stammeringly replied Pierre; while a mysterious color suffused itself over his whole face, neck, and brow; and involuntarily he started a little back from her self-proffering form.

Arrested by this movement Isabel eyed him fixedly; then slowly rose, and with immense mournful stateliness, drew herself up, and said: "If thy sister can ever come too nigh to thee, Pierre, tell thy sister so, beforehand; for the September sun draws not up the valley-vapor more jealously from the disdainful earth, than my secret god shall draw me up from thee, if ever I can come too nigh to thee."

Thus speaking, one hand was on her bosom, as if resolutely feeling of something deadly there concealed; but, riveted by her general manner

more than by her particular gesture, Pierre, at the instant, did not so particularly note the all-significant movement of the hand upon her bosom, though afterward he recalled it, and darkly and thoroughly comprehended its meaning.

"Too nigh to me, Isabel? Sun or dew, thou fertilizest me! Can sunbeams or drops of dew come too nigh the thing they warm and water? Then sit down by me, Isabel, and sit close; wind in within my ribs,--if so thou canst,--that my one frame may be the continent of two."

"Fine feathers make fine birds, so I have heard," said Isabel, most bitterly--"but do fine sayings always make fine deeds? Pierre, thou didst but just now draw away from me!"

"When we would most dearly embrace, we first throw back our arms, Isabel; I but drew away, to draw so much the closer to thee."

"Well; all words are arrant skirmishers; deeds are the army's self! be it as thou sayest. I yet trust to thee.--Pierre."

"My breath waits thine; what is it, Isabel?"

"I have been more blockish than a block; I am mad to think of it! More mad, that her great sweetness should first remind me of mine own stupidity. But she shall not get the start of me! Pierre, some way I must work for thee! See, I will sell this hair; have these teeth pulled

out; but some way I will earn money for thee!"

Pierre now eyed her startledly. Touches of a determinate meaning shone in her; some hidden thing was deeply wounded in her. An affectionate soothing syllable was on his tongue; his arm was out; when shifting his expression, he whisperingly and alarmedly exclaimed--"Hark! she is coming.--Be still."

But rising boldly, Isabel threw open the connecting door, exclaiming half-hysterically--"Look, Lucy; here is the strangest husband; fearful of being caught speaking to his wife!"

With an artist's little box before her--whose rattling, perhaps, had startled Pierre--Lucy was sitting midway in her room, opposite the opened door; so that at that moment, both Pierre and Isabel were plainly visible to her. The singular tone of Isabel's voice instantly caused her to look up intently. At once, a sudden irradiation of some subtile intelligence--but whether welcome to her, or otherwise, could not be determined--shot over her whole aspect. She murmured some vague random reply; and then bent low over her box, saying she was very busy.

Isabel closed the door, and sat down again by Pierre. Her countenance wore a mixed and writhing, impatient look. She seemed as one in whom the most powerful emotion of life is caught in inextricable toils of circumstances, and while longing to disengage itself, still knows that all struggles will prove worse than vain; and so, for the moment, grows

madly reckless and defiant of all obstacles. Pierre trembled as he gazed upon her. But soon the mood passed from her; her old, sweet mournfulness returned; again the clear unfathomableness was in her mystic eye.

"Pierre, ere now,--ere I ever knew thee--I have done mad things, which I have never been conscious of, but in the dim recalling. I hold such things no things of mine. What I now remember, as just now done, was one of them."

"Thou hast done nothing but shown thy strength, while I have shown my weakness, Isabel;--yes, to the whole world thou art my wife--to her, too, thou art my wife. Have I not told her so, myself? I was weaker than a kitten, Isabel; and thou, strong as those high things angelical, from which utmost beauty takes not strength."

"Pierre, once such syllables from thee, were all refreshing, and bedewing to me; now, though they drop as warmly and as fluidly from thee, yet falling through another and an intercepting zone, they freeze on the way, and clatter on my heart like hail, Pierre.---- Thou didst not speak thus to her!"

"She is not Isabel."

The girl gazed at him with a quick and piercing scrutiny; then looked quite calm, and spoke. "My guitar, Pierre: thou know'st how complete a mistress I am of it; now, before thou gettest sitters for the

portrait-sketcher, thou shalt get pupils for the music-teacher. Wilt thou?" and she looked at him with a persuasiveness and touchingness, which to Pierre, seemed more than mortal.

"My poor poor, Isabel!" cried Pierre; "thou art the mistress of the natural sweetness of the guitar, not of its invented regulated artifices; and these are all that the silly pupil will pay for learning. And what thou hast can not be taught. Ah, thy sweet ignorance is all transporting to me! my sweet, my sweet!--dear, divine girl!" And impulsively he caught her in his arms.

While the first fire of his feeling plainly glowed upon him, but ere he had yet caught her to him, Isabel had backward glided close to the connecting door; which, at the instant of his embrace, suddenly opened, as by its own volition.

Before the eyes of seated Lucy, Pierre and Isabel stood locked; Pierre's lips upon her cheek.

II.

Notwithstanding the maternal visit of Mrs. Tartan, and the peremptoriness with which it had been closed by her declared departure never to return, and her vow to teach all Lucy's relatives and friends, and Lucy's own brothers, and her suitor, to disown her, and forget her;

yet Pierre fancied that he knew too much in general of the human heart, and too much in particular of the character of both Glen and Frederic, to remain entirely untouched by disquietude, concerning what those two fiery youths might now be plotting against him, as the imagined monster, by whose infernal tricks Lucy Tartan was supposed to have been seduced from every earthly seemliness. Not happily, but only so much the more gloomily, did he augur from the fact, that Mrs. Tartan had come to Lucy unattended; and that Glen and Frederic had let eight-and-forty hours and more go by, without giving the slightest hostile or neutral sign. At first he thought, that bridling their impulsive fierceness, they were resolved to take the slower, but perhaps the surer method, to wrest Lucy back to them, by instituting some legal process. But this idea was repulsed by more than one consideration.

Not only was Frederic of that sort of temper, peculiar to military men, which would prompt him, in so closely personal and intensely private and family a matter, to scorn the hireling publicity of the law's lingering arm; and impel him, as by the furiousness of fire, to be his own righter and avenger; for, in him, it was perhaps quite as much the feeling of an outrageous family affront to himself, through Lucy, as her own presumed separate wrong, however black, which stung him to the quick: not only were these things so respecting Frederic; but concerning Glen, Pierre well knew, that be Glen heartless as he might, to do a deed of love, Glen was not heartless to do a deed of hate; that though, on that memorable night of his arrival in the city, Glen had heartlessly closed his door upon him, yet now Glen might heartfully burst Pierre's open, if

by that he at all believed, that permanent success would crown the fray.

Besides, Pierre knew this;--that so invincible is the natural, untamable, latent spirit of a courageous manliness in man, that though now socially educated for thousands of years in an arbitrary homage to the Law, as the one only appointed redress for every injured person; yet immemorially and universally, among all gentlemen of spirit, once to have uttered independent personal threats of personal vengeance against your foe, and then, after that, to fall back slinking into a court, and hire with sops a pack of yelping pettifoggers to fight the battle so valiantly proclaimed; this, on the surface, is ever deemed very decorous, and very prudent--a most wise second thought; but, at bottom, a miserably ignoble thing. Frederic was not the watery man for that,--Glen had more grapey blood in him.

Moreover, it seemed quite clear to Pierre, that only by making out Lucy absolutely mad, and striving to prove it by a thousand despicable little particulars, could the law succeed in tearing her from the refuge she had voluntarily sought; a course equally abhorrent to all the parties possibly to be concerned on either side.

What then would those two boiling bloods do? Perhaps they would patrol the streets; and at the first glimpse of lonely Lucy, kidnap her home. Or if Pierre were with her, then, smite him down by hook or crook, fair play or foul; and then, away with Lucy! Or if Lucy systematically kept her room, then fall on Pierre in the most public way, fell him, and

cover him from all decent recognition beneath heaps on heaps of hate and insult; so that broken on the wheel of such dishonor, Pierre might feel himself unstrung, and basely yield the prize.

Not the gibbering of ghosts in any old haunted house; no sulphurous and portentous sign at night beheld in heaven, will so make the hair to stand, as when a proud and honorable man is revolving in his soul the possibilities of some gross public and corporeal disgrace. It is not fear; it is a pride-horror, which is more terrible than any fear. Then, by tremendous imagery, the murderer's mark of Cain is felt burning on the brow, and the already acquitted knife blood-rusts in the clutch of the anticipating hand.

Certain that those two youths must be plotting something furious against him; with the echoes of their scorning curses on the stairs still ringing in his ears--curses, whose swift responses from himself, he, at the time, had had much ado to check;--thoroughly alive to the supernaturalism of that mad frothing hate which a spirited brother forks forth at the insulter of a sister's honor--beyond doubt the most uncompromising of all the social passions known to man--and not blind to the anomalous fact, that if such a brother stab his foe at his own mother's table, all people and all juries would bear him out, accounting every thing allowable to a noble soul made mad by a sweet sister's shame caused by a damned seducer;--imagining to himself his own feelings, if he were actually in the position which Frederic so vividly fancied to be his; remembering that in love matters jealousy is as an adder, and

that the jealousy of Glen was double-added by the extraordinary malice of the apparent circumstances under which Lucy had spurned Glen's arms, and fled to his always successful and now married rival, as if wantonly and shamelessly to nestle there;--remembering all these intense incitements of both those foes of his, Pierre could not but look forward to wild work very soon to come. Nor was the storm of passion in his soul unratiified by the decision of his coolest possible hour. Storm and calm both said to him,--Look to thyself, oh Pierre!

Murders are done by maniacs; but the earnest thoughts of murder, these are the collected desperadoes. Pierre was such; fate, or what you will, had made him such. But such he was. And when these things now swam before him; when he thought of all the ambiguities which hemmed him in; the stony walls all round that he could not overleap; the million aggravations of his most malicious lot; the last lingering hope of happiness licked up from him as by flames of fire, and his one only prospect a black, bottomless gulf of guilt, upon whose verge he imminently teetered every hour;--then the utmost hate of Glen and Frederic were jubilantly welcome to him; and murder, done in the act of warding off their ignominious public blow, seemed the one only congenial sequel to such a desperate career.

III.

As a statue, planted on a revolving pedestal, shows now this limb, now

that; now front, now back, now side; continually changing, too, its general profile; so does the pivoted, statued soul of man, when turned by the hand of Truth. Lies only never vary; look for no invariableness in Pierre. Nor does any canting showman here stand by to announce his phases as he revolves. Catch his phases as your insight may.

Another day passed on; Glen and Frederic still absenting themselves, and Pierre and Isabel and Lucy all dwelling together. The domestic presence of Lucy had begun to produce a remarkable effect upon Pierre. Sometimes, to the covertly watchful eye of Isabel, he would seem to look upon Lucy with an expression illy befitting their singular and so-supposed merely cousinly relation; and yet again, with another expression still more unaccountable to her,--one of fear and awe, not unmixed with impatience. But his general detailed manner toward Lucy was that of the most delicate and affectionate considerateness--nothing more. He was never alone with her; though, as before, at times alone with Isabel.

Lucy seemed entirely undesirous of usurping any place about him; manifested no slightest unwelcome curiosity as to Pierre, and no painful embarrassment as to Isabel. Nevertheless, more and more did she seem, hour by hour, to be somehow inexplicably sliding between them, without touching them. Pierre felt that some strange heavenly influence was near him, to keep him from some uttermost harm; Isabel was alive to some untraceable displacing agency. Though when all three were together, the marvelous serenity, and sweetness, and utter unsuspectingness of Lucy obviated any thing like a common embarrassment: yet if there was any

embarrassment at all beneath that roof, it was sometimes when Pierre was alone with Isabel, after Lucy would innocently quit them.

Meantime Pierre was still going on with his book; every moment becoming still the more sensible of the intensely inauspicious circumstances of all sorts under which that labor was proceeding. And as the now advancing and concentrating enterprise demanded more and more compacted vigor from him, he felt that he was having less and less to bring to it.

For not only was it the signal misery of Pierre, to be invisibly--though but accidentally--goaded, in the hour of mental immaturity, to the attempt at a mature work,--a circumstance sufficiently lamentable in itself; but also, in the hour of his clamorous pennilessness, he was additionally goaded into an enterprise long and protracted in the execution, and of all things least calculated for pecuniary profit in the end. How these things were so, whence they originated, might be thoroughly and very beneficially explained; but space and time here forbid.

At length, domestic matters--rent and bread--had come to such a pass with him, that whether or no, the first pages must go to the printer; and thus was added still another tribulation; because the printed pages now dictated to the following manuscript, and said to all subsequent thoughts and inventions of Pierre--Thus and thus; so and so; else an ill match. Therefore, was his book already limited, bound over, and committed to imperfection, even before it had come to any confirmed form or conclusion at all. Oh, who shall reveal the horrors of poverty in

authorship that is high? While the silly Millthorpe was railing against his delay of a few weeks and months; how bitterly did unreplying Pierre feel in his heart, that to most of the great works of humanity, their authors had given, not weeks and months, not years and years, but their wholly surrendered and dedicated lives. On either hand clung to by a girl who would have laid down her life for him; Pierre, nevertheless, in his deepest, highest part, was utterly without sympathy from any thing divine, human, brute, or vegetable. One in a city of hundreds of thousands of human beings, Pierre was solitary as at the Pole.

And the great woe of all was this: that all these things were unsuspected without, and undivulgible from within; the very daggers that stabbed him were joked at by Imbecility, Ignorance, Blockheadedness, Self-Complacency, and the universal Blearedness and Besottedness around him. Now he began to feel that in him, the thews of a Titan were forestallingly cut by the scissors of Fate. He felt as a moose, hamstrung. All things that think, or move, or lie still, seemed as created to mock and torment him. He seemed gifted with loftiness, merely that it might be dragged down to the mud. Still, the profound willfulness in him would not give up. Against the breaking heart, and the bursting head; against all the dismal lassitude, and deathful faintness and sleeplessness, and whirlingness, and craziness, still he like a demigod bore up. His soul's ship foresaw the inevitable rocks, but resolved to sail on, and make a courageous wreck. Now he gave jeer for jeer, and taunted the apes that jibed him. With the soul of an Atheist, he wrote down the godliest things; with the feeling of misery

and death in him, he created forms of gladness and life. For the pangs in his heart, he put down hoots on the paper. And every thing else he disguised under the so conveniently adjustable drapery of all-stretchable Philosophy. For the more and the more that he wrote, and the deeper and the deeper that he dived, Pierre saw the everlasting elusiveness of Truth; the universal lurking insincerity of even the greatest and purest written thoughts. Like knavish cards, the leaves of all great books were covertly packed. He was but packing one set the more; and that a very poor jaded set and pack indeed. So that there was nothing he more spurned, than his own aspirations; nothing he more abhorred than the loftiest part of himself. The brightest success, now seemed intolerable to him, since he so plainly saw, that the brightest success could not be the sole offspring of Merit; but of Merit for the one thousandth part, and nine hundred and ninety-nine combining and dove-tailing accidents for the rest. So beforehand he despised those laurels which in the very nature of things, can never be impartially bestowed. But while thus all the earth was depopulated of ambition for him; still circumstances had put him in the attitude of an eager contender for renown. So beforehand he felt the unrevealable sting of receiving either plaudits or censures, equally unsought for, and equally loathed ere given. So, beforehand he felt the pyramidal scorn of the genuine loftiness for the whole infinite company of infinitesimal critics. His was the scorn which thinks it not worth the while to be scornful. Those he most scorned, never knew it. In that lonely little closet of his, Pierre foretasted all that this world hath either of praise or dispraise; and thus foretasting both goblets, anticipatively

hurled them both in its teeth. All panegyric, all denunciation, all criticism of any sort, would come too late for Pierre.

But man does never give himself up thus, a doorless and shutterless house for the four loosened winds of heaven to howl through, without still additional dilapidations. Much oftener than before, Pierre laid back in his chair with the deadly feeling of faintness. Much oftener than before, came staggering home from his evening walk, and from sheer bodily exhaustion economized the breath that answered the anxious inquiries as to what might be done for him. And as if all the leagued spiritual inveteracies and malices, combined with his general bodily exhaustion, were not enough, a special corporeal affliction now descended like a sky-hawk upon him. His incessant application told upon his eyes. They became so affected, that some days he wrote with the lids nearly closed, fearful of opening them wide to the light. Through the lashes he peered upon the paper, which so seemed fretted with wires. Sometimes he blindly wrote with his eyes turned away from the paper;--thus unconsciously symbolizing the hostile necessity and distaste, the former whereof made of him this most unwilling states-prisoner of letters.

As every evening, after his day's writing was done, the proofs of the beginning of his work came home for correction, Isabel would read them to him. They were replete with errors; but preoccupied by the thronging, and undiluted, pure imaginings of things, he became impatient of such minute, gnat-like torments; he randomly corrected the worst, and let

the rest go; jeering with himself at the rich harvest thus furnished to the entomological critics.

But at last he received a tremendous interior intimation, to hold off--to be still from his unnatural struggle.

In the earlier progress of his book, he had found some relief in making his regular evening walk through the greatest thoroughfare of the city; that so, the utter isolation of his soul, might feel itself the more intensely from the incessant joggings of his body against the bodies of the hurrying thousands. Then he began to be sensible of more fancying stormy nights, than pleasant ones; for then, the great thoroughfares were less thronged, and the innumerable shop-awnings flapped and beat like schooners' broad sails in a gale, and the shutters banged like lashed bulwarks; and the slates fell hurtling like displaced ship's blocks from aloft. Stemming such tempests through the deserted streets, Pierre felt a dark, triumphant joy; that while others had crawled in fear to their kennels, he alone defied the storm-admiral, whose most vindictive peltings of hail-stones,--striking his iron-framed fiery furnace of a body,--melted into soft dew, and so, harmlessly trickled from off him.

By-and-by, of such howling, pelting nights, he began to bend his steps down the dark, narrow side-streets, in quest of the more secluded and mysterious tap-rooms. There he would feel a singular satisfaction, in sitting down all dripping in a chair, ordering his half-pint of ale

before him, and drawing over his cap to protect his eyes from the light, eye the varied faces of the social castaways, who here had their haunts from the bitterest midnights.

But at last he began to feel a distaste for even these; and now nothing but the utter night-desolation of the obscurest warehousing lanes would content him, or be at all sufferable to him. Among these he had now been accustomed to wind in and out every evening; till one night as he paused a moment previous to turning about for home, a sudden, unwonted, and all-pervading sensation seized him. He knew not where he was; he did not have any ordinary life-feeling at all. He could not see; though instinctively putting his hand to his eyes, he seemed to feel that the lids were open. Then he was sensible of a combined blindness, and vertigo, and staggering; before his eyes a million green meteors danced; he felt his foot tottering upon the curb, he put out his hands, and knew no more for the time. When he came to himself he found that he was lying crosswise in the gutter, dabbled with mud and slime. He raised himself to try if he could stand; but the fit was entirely gone. Immediately he quickened his steps homeward, forbearing to rest or pause at all on the way, lest that rush of blood to his head, consequent upon his sudden cessation from walking, should again smite him down. This circumstance warned him away from those desolate streets, lest the repetition of the fit should leave him there to perish by night in unknown and unsuspected loneliness. But if that terrible vertigo had been also intended for another and deeper warning, he regarded such added warning not at all; but again plied heart and brain as before.

But now at last since the very blood in his body had in vain rebelled against his Titanic soul; now the only visible outward symbols of that soul--his eyes--did also turn downright traitors to him, and with more success than the rebellious blood. He had abused them so recklessly, that now they absolutely refused to look on paper. He turned them on paper, and they blinked and shut. The pupils of his eyes rolled away from him in their own orbits. He put his hand up to them, and sat back in his seat. Then, without saying one word, he continued there for his usual term, suspended, motionless, blank.

But next morning--it was some few days after the arrival of Lucy--still feeling that a certain downright infatuation, and no less, is both unavoidable and indispensable in the composition of any great, deep book, or even any wholly unsuccessful attempt at any great, deep book; next morning he returned to the charge. But again the pupils of his eyes rolled away from him in their orbits: and now a general and nameless torpor--some horrible foretaste of death itself--seemed stealing upon him.

IV.

During this state of semi-unconsciousness, or rather trance, a remarkable dream or vision came to him. The actual artificial objects around him slid from him, and were replaced by a baseless yet most

imposing spectacle of natural scenery. But though a baseless vision in itself, this airy spectacle assumed very familiar features to Pierre. It was the phantasmagoria of the Mount of the Titans, a singular height standing quite detached in a wide solitude not far from the grand range of dark blue hills encircling his ancestral manor.

Say what some poets will, Nature is not so much her own ever-sweet interpreter, as the mere supplier of that cunning alphabet, whereby selecting and combining as he pleases, each man reads his own peculiar lesson according to his own peculiar mind and mood. Thus a high-aspiring, but most moody, disappointed bard, chancing once to visit the Meadows and beholding that fine eminence, christened it by the name it ever after bore; completely extinguishing its former title--The Delectable Mountain--one long ago bestowed by an old Baptist farmer, an hereditary admirer of Bunyan and his most marvelous book. From the spell of that name the mountain never afterward escaped; for now, gazing upon it by the light of those suggestive syllables, no poetical observer could resist the apparent felicity of the title. For as if indeed the immemorial mount would fain adapt itself to its so recent name, some people said that it had insensibly changed its pervading aspect within a score or two of winters. Nor was this strange conceit entirely without foundation, seeing that the annual displacements of huge rocks and gigantic trees were continually modifying its whole front and general contour.

On the north side, where it fronted the old Manor-house, some fifteen

miles distant, the height, viewed from the piazza of a soft haze-canopied summer's noon, presented a long and beautiful, but not entirely inaccessible-looking purple precipice, some two thousand feet in air, and on each hand sideways sloping down to lofty terraces of pastures.

Those hill-side pastures, be it said, were thickly sown with a small white amaranthine flower, which, being irreconcilably distasteful to the cattle, and wholly rejected by them, and yet, continually multiplying on every hand, did by no means contribute to the agricultural value of those elevated lands. Insomuch, that for this cause, the disheartened dairy tenants of that part of the Manor, had petitioned their lady-landlord for some abatement in their annual tribute of upland grasses, in the Juny-load; rolls of butter in the October crock; and steers and heifers on the October hoof; with turkeys in the Christmas sleigh.

"The small white flower, it is our bane!" the imploring tenants cried.

"The aspiring amaranth, every year it climbs and adds new terraces to its sway! The immortal amaranth, it will not die, but last year's flowers survive to this! The terraced pastures grow glittering white, and in warm June still show like banks of snow:--fit token of the sterileness the amaranth begets! Then free us from the amaranth, good lady, or be pleased to abate our rent!"

Now, on a somewhat nearer approach, the precipice did not belie its

purple promise from the manorial piazza--that sweet imposing purple promise, which seemed fully to vindicate the Bunyanish old title originally bestowed;--but showed the profuse aerial foliage of a hanging forest. Nevertheless, coming still more nigh, long and frequent rents among the mass of leaves revealed horrible glimpses of dark-dripping rocks, and mysterious mouths of wolfish caves. Struck by this most unanticipated view, the tourist now quickened his impulsive steps to verify the change by coming into direct contact with so chameleon a height. As he would now speed on, the lower ground, which from the manor-house piazza seemed all a grassy level, suddenly merged into a very long and weary acclivity, slowly rising close up to the precipice's base; so that the efflorescent grasses rippled against it, as the efflorescent waves of some great swell or long rolling billow ripple against the water-line of a steep gigantic war-ship on the sea. And, as among the rolling sea-like sands of Egypt, disordered rows of broken Sphinxes lead to the Cheopian pyramid itself; so this long acclivity was thickly strewn with enormous rocky masses, grotesque in shape, and with wonderful features on them, which seemed to express that slumbering intelligence visible in some recumbent beasts--beasts whose intelligence seems struck dumb in them by some sorrowful and inexplicable spell. Nevertheless, round and round those still enchanted rocks, hard by their utmost rims, and in among their cunning crevices, the misanthropic hill-scaling goat nibbled his sweetest food; for the rocks, so barren in themselves, distilled a subtile moisture, which fed with greenness all things that grew about their igneous marge.

Quitting those recumbent rocks, you still ascended toward the hanging forest, and piercing within its lowermost fringe, then suddenly you stood transfixed, as a marching soldier confounded at the sight of an impregnable redoubt, where he had fancied it a practicable vault to his courageous thews. Cunningly masked hitherto, by the green tapestry of the interlacing leaves, a terrific towering palisade of dark mossy massiness confronted you; and, trickling with unevaporable moisture, distilled upon you from its beetling brow slow thunder-showers of water-drops, chill as the last dews of death. Now you stood and shivered in that twilight, though it were high noon and burning August down the meads. All round and round, the grim scarred rocks rallied and re-rallied themselves; shot up, protruded, stretched, swelled, and eagerly reached forth; on every side bristlingly radiating with a hideous repellingness. Tossed, and piled, and indiscriminate among these, like bridging rifts of logs up-jammed in alluvial-rushing streams of far Arkansas: or, like great masts and yards of overwhelmed fleets hurled high and dashed amain, all splintering together, on hovering ridges of the Atlantic sea,--you saw the melancholy trophies which the North Wind, championing the unquenchable quarrel of the Winter, had wrested from the forests, and dismembered them on their own chosen battle-ground, in barbarous disdain. 'Mid this spectacle of wide and wanton spoil, insular noises of falling rocks would boomingly explode upon the silence and fright all the echoes, which ran shrieking in and out among the caves, as wailing women and children in some assaulted town.

Stark desolation; ruin, merciless and ceaseless; chills and gloom,--all here lived a hidden life, curtained by that cunning purpleness, which, from the piazza of the manor house, so beautifully invested the mountain once called Delectable, but now styled Titanic.

Beaten off by such undreamed-of glooms and steeps, you now sadly retraced your steps, and, mayhap, went skirting the inferior sideway terraces of pastures; where the multiple and most sterile inodorous immortality of the small, white flower furnished no aliment for the mild cow's meditative cud. But here and there you still might smell from far the sweet aromaticness of clumps of catnip, that dear farm-house herb. Soon you would see the modest verdure of the plant itself; and wheresoever you saw that sight, old foundation stones and rotting timbers of log-houses long extinct would also meet your eye; their desolation illy hid by the green solitudes of the unmigrating herb. Most fitly named the catnip; since, like the unrunagate cat, though all that's human forsake the place, that plant will long abide, long bask and bloom on the abandoned hearth. Illy hid; for every spring the amaranthine and celestial flower gained on the mortal household herb; for every autumn the catnip died, but never an autumn made the amaranth to wane. The catnip and the amaranth!--man's earthly household peace, and the ever-encroaching appetite for God.

No more now you sideways followed the sad pasture's skirt, but took your way adown the long declivity, fronting the mystic height. In mid field again you paused among the recumbent sphinx-like shapes thrown off from

the rocky steep. You paused; fixed by a form defiant, a form of awfulness. You saw Enceladus the Titan, the most potent of all the giants, writhing from out the imprisoning earth;--turbaned with upborn moss he writhed; still, though armless, resisting with his whole striving trunk, the Pelion and the Ossa hurled back at him;--turbaned with upborn moss he writhed; still turning his unconquerable front toward that majestic mount eternally in vain assailed by him, and which, when it had stormed him off, had heaved his undoffable incubus upon him, and deridingly left him there to bay out his ineffectual howl.

To Pierre this wondrous shape had always been a thing of interest, though hitherto all its latent significance had never fully and intelligibly smitten him. In his earlier boyhood a strolling company of young collegian pedestrians had chanced to light upon the rock; and, struck with its remarkableness, had brought a score of picks and spades, and dug round it to unearth it, and find whether indeed it were a demoniac freak of nature, or some stern thing of antediluvian art. Accompanying this eager party, Pierre first beheld that deathless son of Terra. At that time, in its untouched natural state, the statue presented nothing but the turbaned head of igneous rock rising from out the soil, with its unabasable face turned upward toward the mountain, and the bull-like neck clearly defined. With distorted features, scarred and broken, and a black brow mocked by the upborn moss, Enceladus there subterraneously stood, fast frozen into the earth at the junction of the neck. Spades and picks soon heaved part of his Ossa from him, till at last a circular well was opened round him to the depth of some thirteen

feet. At that point the wearied young collegians gave over their enterprise in despair. With all their toil, they had not yet come to the girdle of Enceladus. But they had bared good part of his mighty chest, and exposed his mutilated shoulders, and the stumps of his once audacious arms. Thus far uncovering his shame, in that cruel plight they had abandoned him, leaving stark naked his in vain indignant chest to the defilements of the birds, which for untold ages had cast their foulness on his vanquished crest.

Not unworthy to be compared with that leaden Titan, wherewith the art of Marsy and the broad-flung pride of Bourbon enriched the enchanted gardens of Versailles;--and from whose still twisted mouth for sixty feet the waters yet upgush, in elemental rivalry with those Etna flames, of old asserted to be the malicious breath of the borne-down giant;--not unworthy to be compared with that leaden demi-god--piled with costly rocks, and with one bent wrenching knee protruding from the broken bronze;--not unworthy to be compared with that bold trophy of high art, this American Enceladus, wrought by the vigorous hand of Nature's self, it did go further than compare;--it did far surpass that fine figure molded by the inferior skill of man. Marsy gave arms to the eternally defenseless; but Nature, more truthful, performed an amputation, and left the impotent Titan without one serviceable ball-and-socket above the thigh.

Such was the wild scenery--the Mount of Titans, and the repulsed group of heaven-assaulters, with Enceladus in their midst shamefully recumbent

at its base;--such was the wild scenery, which now to Pierre, in his strange vision, displaced the four blank walls, the desk, and camp-bed, and domineered upon his trance. But no longer petrified in all their ignominious attitudes, the herded Titans now sprung to their feet; flung themselves up the slope; and anew battered at the precipice's unresounding wall. Foremost among them all, he saw a moss-turbaned, armless giant, who despairing of any other mode of wreaking his immitigable hate, turned his vast trunk into a battering-ram, and hurled his own arched-out ribs again and yet again against the invulnerable steep.

"Enceladus! it is Enceladus!"--Pierre cried out in his sleep. That moment the phantom faced him; and Pierre saw Enceladus no more; but on the Titan's armless trunk, his own duplicate face and features magnifiedly gleamed upon him with prophetic discomfiture and woe. With trembling frame he started from his chair, and woke from that ideal horror to all his actual grief.

V.

Nor did Pierre's random knowledge of the ancient fables fail still further to elucidate the vision which so strangely had supplied a tongue to muteness. But that elucidation was most repulsively fateful and foreboding; possibly because Pierre did not leap the final barrier of gloom; possibly because Pierre did not willfully wrest some final

comfort from the fable; did not flog this stubborn rock as Moses his, and force even aridity itself to quench his painful thirst.

Thus smitten, the Mount of Titans seems to yield this following stream:--

Old Titan's self was the son of incestuous Coelus and Terra, the son of incestuous Heaven and Earth. And Titan married his mother Terra, another and accumulatively incestuous match. And thereof Enceladus was one issue. So Enceladus was both the son and grandson of an incest; and even thus, there had been born from the organic blended heavenliness and earthliness of Pierre, another mixed, uncertain, heaven-aspiring, but still not wholly earth-emancipated mood; which again, by its terrestrial taint held down to its terrestrial mother, generated there the present doubly incestuous Enceladus within him; so that the present mood of Pierre--that reckless sky-assaulting mood of his, was nevertheless on one side the grandson of the sky. For it is according to eternal fitness, that the precipitated Titan should still seek to regain his paternal birthright even by fierce escalade. Wherefore whoso storms the sky gives best proof he came from thither! But whatso crawls contented in the moat before that crystal fort, shows it was born within that slime, and there forever will abide.

Recovered somewhat from the after-spell of this wild vision folded in his trance, Pierre composed his front as best he might, and straightway left his fatal closet. Concentrating all the remaining stuff in him, he

resolved by an entire and violent change, and by a willful act against his own most habitual inclinations, to wrestle with the strange malady of his eyes, this new death-fiend of the trance, and this Inferno of his Titanic vision.

And now, just as he crossed the threshold of the closet, he writhingly strove to assume an expression intended to be not uncheerful--though how indeed his countenance at all looked, he could not tell; for dreading some insupportably dark revealments in his glass, he had of late wholly abstained from appealing to it--and in his mind he rapidly conned over, what indifferent, disguising, or light-hearted gamesome things he should say, when proposing to his companions the little design he cherished.

And even so, to grim Enceladus, the world the gods had chained for a ball to drag at his o'erfreighted feet;--even so that globe put forth a thousand flowers, whose fragile smiles disguised his ponderous load.