Melville Herman

Pierre; or The Ambiguities

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Содержание

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TO

Greylock's Most Excellent Majesty

IN old times authors were proud of the privilege of dedicating their works to Majesty. A right noble custom, which we of Berkshire must revive. For whether we will or no, Majesty is all around us here in Berkshire, sitting as in a grand Congress of Vienna of majestical hill-tops, and eternally challenging our homage.

But since the majestic mountain, Greylock – my own more immediate sovereign lord and king – hath now, for innumerable ages, been the one grand dedicatee of the earliest rays of all the Berkshire mornings, I know not how his Imperial Purple Majesty (royal-born: Porphyrogenitus) will receive the dedication of my own poor solitary ray.

Nevertheless, forasmuch as I, dwelling with my loyal neighbors, the Maples and the Beeches, in the amphitheater over which his central majesty presides, have received his most bounteous and unstinted fertilizations, it is but meet, that I here devoutly kneel, and render up my gratitude, whether, thereto, The Most Excellent Purple Majesty of Greylock benignantly incline his hoary crown or no.

Pittsfield, Mass.

BOOK I.
PIERRE JUST EMERGING FROM HIS TEENS

I

THERE are some strange summer mornings in the country, when he who is but a sojourner from the city shall early walk forth into the fields, and be wonder-smitten with the trance-like aspect of the green and golden world. Not a flower stirs; the trees forget to wave; the grass itself seems to have ceased to grow; and all Nature, as if suddenly become conscious of her own profound mystery, and feeling no refuge from it but silence, sinks into this wonderful and indescribable repose.

Such was the morning in June, when, issuing from the embowered and high-gabled old home of his fathers, Pierre, dewily refreshed and spiritualized by sleep, gayly entered the long, wide, elm-arched street of the village, and half unconsciously bent his steps toward a cottage, which peeped into view near the end of the vista.

The verdant trance lay far and wide; and through it nothing came but the brindled kine, dreamily wandering to their pastures, followed, not driven, by ruddy-cheeked, white-footed boys.

As touched and bewitched by the loveliness of this silence, Pierre neared the cottage, and lifted his eyes, he swiftly paused, fixing his glance upon one upper, open casement there. Why now this impassioned, youthful pause? Why this enkindled cheek and eye? Upon the sill of the casement, a snow-white glossy pillow reposes, and a trailing shrub has softly rested a rich, crimson flower against it.

Well mayst thou seek that pillow, thou odoriferous flower, thought Pierre; not an hour ago, her own cheek must have rested there. "Lucy!"

"Pierre!"

As heart rings to heart those voices rang, and for a moment, in the bright hush of the morning, the two stood silently but ardently eying each other, beholding mutual reflections of a boundless admiration and love.

"Nothing but Pierre," laughed the youth, at last; "thou hast forgotten to bid me good-morning."

"That would be little. Good-mornings, good-evenings, good days, weeks, months, and years to thee, Pierre; – bright Pierre! – Pierre!"

Truly, thought the youth, with a still gaze of inexpressible fondness; truly the skies do ope, and this invoking angel looks down. – "I would return thee thy manifold good-mornings, Lucy, did not that presume thou had'st lived through a night; and by Heaven, thou belong'st to the regions of an infinite day!"

"Fie, now, Pierre; why should ye youths always swear when ye love!"

"Because in us love is profane, since it mortally reaches toward the heaven in ye!"

"There thou fly'st again, Pierre; thou art always circumventing me so. Tell me, why should ye youths ever show so sweet an expertness in turning all trifles of ours into trophies of yours?"

"I know not how that is, but ever was it our fashion to do." And shaking the casement shrub, he dislodged the flower, and conspicuously fastened it in his bosom. – "I must away now, Lucy; see! under these colors I march."

"Bravissimo! oh, my only recruit!"

II

PIERRE was the only son of an affluent, and haughty widow; a lady who externally furnished a singular example of the preservative and beautifying influences of unfluctuating rank, health, and wealth, when joined to a fine mind of medium culture, uncankered by any inconsolable grief, and never worn by sordid cares. In mature age, the rose still miraculously clung to her cheek; litheness had not yet completely uncoiled itself from her waist, nor smoothness unscrolled itself from her brow, nor diamondness departed from her eyes. So that when lit up and bediademed by ball-room lights, Mrs. Glendinning still eclipsed far younger charms, and had she chosen to encourage them, would have been followed by a train of infatuated suitors, little less young than her own son Pierre.

But a reverential and devoted son seemed lover enough for this widow Bloom; and besides all this, Pierre when namelessly annoyed, and sometimes even jealously transported by the too ardent admiration of the handsome youths, who now and then, caught in unintended snares, seemed to entertain some insane hopes of wedding this unattainable being; Pierre had more than once, with a playful malice, openly sworn, that the man – gray-beard, or beardless – who should dare to propose marriage to his mother, that man would by some peremptory unrevealed agency immediately disappear from the earth.

This romantic filial love of Pierre seemed fully returned by the triumphant maternal pride of the widow, who in the clear-cut lineaments and noble air of the son, saw her own graces strangely translated into the opposite sex. There was a striking personal resemblance between them; and as the mother seemed to have long stood still in her beauty, heedless of the passing years; so Pierre seemed to meet her half-way, and by a splendid precocity of form and feature, almost advanced himself to that mature stand-point in Time, where his pedestaled mother so long had stood. In the playfulness of their unclouded love, and with that strange license which a perfect confidence and mutual understanding at all points, had long bred between them, they were wont to call each other brother and sister. Both in public and private this was their usage; nor when thrown among strangers, was this mode of address ever suspected for a sportful assumption; since the amaranthiness of Mrs. Glendinning fully sustained this youthful pretension. – Thus freely and lightsomely for mother and son flowed on the pure joined current of life. But as yet the fair river had not borne its waves to those sideways repelling rocks, where it was thenceforth destined to be forever divided into two unmixing streams.

An excellent English author of these times enumerating the prime advantages of his natal lot, cites foremost, that he first saw the rural light. So with Pierre. It had been his choice fate to have been born and nurtured in the country, surrounded by scenery whose uncommon loveliness was the perfect mould of a delicate and poetic mind; while the popular names of its finest features appealed to the proudest patriotic and family associations of the historic line of Glendinning. On the meadows which sloped away from the shaded rear of the manorial mansion, far to the winding river, an Indian battle had been fought, in the earlier days of the colony, and in that battle the paternal great-grandfather of Pierre, mortally wounded, had sat unhorsed on his saddle in the grass, with his dying voice, still cheering his men in the fray. This was Saddle-Meadows, a name likewise extended to the mansion and the village. Far beyond these plains, a day's walk for Pierre, rose the storied heights, where in the Revolutionary War his grandfather had for several months defended a rude but all-important stockaded fort, against the repeated combined assaults of Indians, Tories, and Regulars. From before that fort, the gentlemanly, but murderous half-breed, Brandt, had fled, but had survived to dine with General Glendinning, in the amicable times which followed that vindictive war. All the associations of Saddle-Meadows were full of pride to Pierre. The Glendinning deeds by which their estate had so long been held, bore the cyphers of three Indian kings, the aboriginal and only conveyancers of those noble woods and plains. Thus loftily, in the days of his circumscribed youth, did Pierre glance

along the background of his race; little recking of that maturer and larger interior development, which should forever deprive these things of their full power of pride in his soul.

But the breeding of Pierre would have been unwisely contracted, had his youth been unintermittingly passed in these rural scenes. At a very early period he had begun to accompany his father and mother – and afterwards his mother alone – in their annual visits to the city; where naturally mingling in a large and polished society, Pierre had insensibly formed himself in the airier graces of life, without enfeebling the vigor derived from a martial race, and fostered in the country's clarion air.

Nor while thus liberally developed in person and manners, was Pierre deficient in a still better and finer culture. Not in vain had he spent long summer afternoons in the deep recesses of his father's fastidiously picked and decorous library; where the Spenserian nymphs had early led him into many a maze of all-bewildering beauty. Thus, with a graceful glow on his limbs, and soft, imaginative flames in his heart, did this Pierre glide toward maturity, thoughtless of that period of remorseless insight, when all these delicate warmths should seem frigid to him, and he should madly demand more ardent fires.

Nor had that pride and love which had so bountifully provided for the youthful nurture of Pierre, neglected his culture in the deepest element of all. It had been a maxim with the father of Pierre, that all gentlemanhood was vain; all claims to it preposterous and absurd, unless the primeval gentleness and golden humanities of religion had been so thoroughly wrought into the complete texture of the character, that he who pronounced himself gentleman, could also rightfully assume the meek, but kingly style of Christian. At the age of sixteen, Pierre partook with his mother of the Holy Sacraments.

It were needless, and more difficult, perhaps, to trace out precisely the absolute motives which prompted these youthful vows. Enough, that as to Pierre had descended the numerous other noble qualities of his ancestors; and as he now stood heir to their forests and farms; so by the same insensible sliding process, he seemed to have inherited their docile homage to a venerable Faith, which the first Glendinning had brought over sea, from beneath the shadow of an English minister. Thus in Pierre was the complete polished steel of the gentleman, girded with Religion's silken sash; and his great-grandfather's soldierly fate had taught him that the generous sash should, in the last bitter trial, furnish its wearer with Glory's shroud; so that what through life had been worn for Grace's sake, in death might safely hold the man. But while thus all alive to the beauty and poesy of his father's faith, Pierre little foresaw that this world hath a secret deeper than beauty, and Life some burdens heavier than death.

So perfect to Pierre had long seemed the illuminated scroll of his life thus far, that only one hiatus was discoverable by him in that sweetly-writ manuscript. A sister had been omitted from the text. He mourned that so delicious a feeling as fraternal love had been denied him. Nor could the fictitious title, which he so often lavished upon his mother, at all supply the absent reality. This emotion was most natural; and the full cause and reason of it even Pierre did not at that time entirely appreciate. For surely a gentle sister is the second best gift to a man; and it is first in point of occurrence; for the wife comes after. He who is sisterless, is as a bachelor before his time. For much that goes to make up the deliciousness of a wife, already lies in the sister.

"Oh, had my father but had a daughter!" cried Pierre; "some one whom I might love, and protect, and fight for, if need be. It must be a glorious thing to engage in a mortal quarrel on a sweet sister's behalf! Now, of all things, would to heaven, I had a sister!"

Thus, ere entranced in the gentler bonds of a lover; thus often would Pierre invoke heaven for a sister; but Pierre did not then know, that if there be any thing a man might well pray against, that thing is the responsive gratification of some of the devoutest prayers of his youth.

It may have been that this strange yearning of Pierre for a sister, had part of its origin in that still stranger feeling of loneliness he sometimes experienced, as not only the solitary head of his family, but the only surnamed male Glendinning extant. A powerful and populous family had by degrees run off into the female branches; so that Pierre found himself surrounded by numerous kinsmen and

kinswomen, yet companioned by no surnamed male Glendinning, but the duplicate one reflected to him in the mirror. But in his more wonted natural mood, this thought was not wholly sad to him. Nay, sometimes it mounted into an exultant swell. For in the ruddiness, and flushfulness, and vain-gloriousness of his youthful soul, he fondly hoped to have a monopoly of glory in capping the fame-column, whose tall shaft had been erected by his noble sires.

In all this, how unadmonished was our Pierre by that foreboding and prophetic lesson taught, not less by Palmyra's quarries, than by Palmyra's ruins. Among those ruins is a crumbling, uncompleted shaft, and some leagues off, ages ago left in the quarry, is the crumbling corresponding capital, also incomplete. These Time seized and spoiled; these Time crushed in the egg; and the proud stone that should have stood among the clouds, Time left abased beneath the soil. Oh, what quenchless feud is this, that Time hath with the sons of Men!

III

IT has been said that the beautiful country round about Pierre appealed to very proud memories. But not only through the mere chances of things, had that fine country become ennobled by the deeds of his sires, but in Pierre's eyes, all its hills and swales seemed as sanctified through their very long uninterrupted possession by his race.

That fond ideality which, in the eyes of affection, hallows the least trinket once familiar to the person of a departed love; with Pierre that talisman touched the whole earthly landscape about him; for remembering that on those hills his own fine fathers had gazed; through those woods, over these lawns, by that stream, along these tangled paths, many a grand-dame of his had merrily strolled when a girl; vividly recalling these things, Pierre deemed all that part of the earth a love-token; so that his very horizon was to him as a memorial ring.

The monarchical world very generally imagines, that in demagoguical America the sacred Past hath no fixed statues erected to it, but all things irreverently seethe and boil in the vulgar caldron of an everlasting uncrystalizing Present. This conceit would seem peculiarly applicable to the social condition. With no chartered aristocracy, and no law of entail, how can any family in America imposingly perpetuate itself? Certainly that common saying among us, which declares, that be a family conspicuous as it may, a single half-century shall see it abased; that maxim undoubtedly holds true with the commonalty. In our cities families rise and burst like bubbles in a vat. For indeed the democratic element operates as a subtile acid among us; forever producing new things by corroding the old; as in the south of France verdigris, the primitive material of one kind of green paint, is produced by grape-vinegar poured upon copper plates. Now in general nothing can be more significant of decay than the idea of corrosion; yet on the other hand, nothing can more vividly suggest luxuriance of life, than the idea of green as a color; for green is the peculiar signet of all-fertile Nature herself. Herein by apt analogy we behold the marked anomalousness of America; whose character abroad, we need not be surprised, is misconceived, when we consider how strangely she contradicts all prior notions of human things; and how wonderfully to her, Death itself becomes transmuted into Life. So that political institutions, which in other lands seem above all things intensely artificial, with America seem to possess the divine virtue of a natural law; for the most mighty of nature's laws is this, that out of Death she brings Life.

Still, are there things in the visible world, over which ever-shifting Nature hath not so unbounded a sway. The grass is annually changed; but the limbs of the oak, for a long term of years, defy that annual decree. And if in America the vast mass of families be as the blades of grass, yet some few there are that stand as the oak; which, instead of decaying, annually puts forth new branches; whereby Time, instead of subtracting, is made to capitulate into a multiple virtue.

In this matter we will – not superciliously, but in fair spirit – compare pedigrees with England, and strange as it may seem at the first blush, not without some claim to equality. I dare say, that in

this thing the Peerage Book is a good statistical standard whereby to judge her; since the compilers of that work can not be entirely insensible on whose patronage they most rely; and the common intelligence of our own people shall suffice to judge us. But the magnificence of names must not mislead us as to the humility of things. For as the breath in all our lungs is hereditary, and my present breath at this moment, is further descended than the body of the present High Priest of the Jews, so far as he can assuredly trace it; so mere names, which are also but air, do likewise revel in this endless descendedness. But if Richmond, and St. Albans, and Grafton, and Portland, and Buccleugh, be names almost old as England herself, the present Dukes of those names stop in their own genuine pedigrees at Charles II., and there find no very fine fountain; since what we would deem the least glorious parentage under the sun, is precisely the parentage of a Buccleugh, for example; whose ancestress could not well avoid being a mother, it is true, but had accidentally omitted the preliminary rite. Yet a king was the sire. Then only so much the worse; for if it be small insult to be struck by a pauper, but mortal offense to receive a blow from a gentleman, then of all things the bye-blows of kings must be signally unflattering. In England the Peerage is kept alive by incessant restorations and creations. One man, George III., manufactured five hundred and twenty-two peers. An earldom, in abeyance for five centuries, has suddenly been assumed by some commoner, to whom it had not so much descended, as through the art of the lawyers been made flexibly to bend in that direction. For not Thames is so sinuous in his natural course, not the Bridgewater Canal more artificially conducted, than blood in the veins of that winding or manufactured nobility. Perishable as stubble, and fungous as the fungi, those grafted families successively live and die on the eternal soil of a name. In England this day, twenty-five hundred peerages are extinct; but the names survive. So that the empty air of a name is more endurable than a man, or than dynasties of men; the air fills man's lungs and puts life into a man, but man fills not the air, nor puts life into that.

All honor to the names then, and all courtesy to the men; but if St. Albans tell me he is all-honorable and all-eternal, I must still politely refer him to Nell Gwynne.

Beyond Charles II. very few indeed – hardly worthy of note – are the present titled English families which can trace any thing like a direct unvitiated blood-descent from the thief knights of the Norman. Beyond Charles II. their direct genealogies seem vain as though some Jew clothesman, with a tea-canister on his head, turned over the first chapter of St. Matthew to make out his unmingled participation in the blood of King Saul, who had long died ere the career of the Cæsar began.

Now, not preliminarily to enlarge upon the fact that, while in England an immense mass of state-masonry is brought to bear as a buttress in upholding the hereditary existence of certain houses, while with us nothing of that kind can possibly be admitted; and to omit all mention of the hundreds of unobtrusive families in New England who, nevertheless, might easily trace their uninterrupted English lineage to a time before Charles the Blade: not to speak of the old and oriental-like English planter families of Virginia and the South; the Randolphs for example, one of whose ancestors, in King James' time, married Pocahontas the Indian Princess, and in whose blood therefore an underived aboriginal royalty was flowing over two hundred years ago; consider those most ancient and magnificent Dutch Manors at the North, whose perches are miles – whose meadows overspread adjacent countries – and whose haughty rent-deeds are held by their thousand farmer tenants, so long as grass grows and water runs; which hints of a surprising eternity for a deed, and seem to make lawyer's ink unobliterable as the sea. Some of those manors are two centuries old; and their present patrons or lords will show you stakes and stones on their estates put there – the stones at least – before Nell Gwynne the Duke-mother was born, and genealogies which, like their own river, Hudson, flow somewhat farther and straighter than the Serpentine brooklet in Hyde Park.

These far-descended Dutch meadows lie steeped in a Hindooish haze; an eastern patriarchalness sways its mild crook over pastures, whose tenant flocks shall there feed, long as their own grass grows, long as their own water shall run. Such estates seem to defy Time's tooth, and by conditions which take

hold of the indestructible earth seem to contemporize their fee-simples with eternity. Unimaginable audacity of a worm that but crawls through the soil he so imperially claims!

In midland counties of England they boast of old oaken dining-halls where three hundred men-at-arms could exercise of a rainy afternoon, in the reign of the Plantagenets. But our lords, the Patroons, appeal not to the past, but they point to the present. One will show you that the public census of a county is but part of the roll of his tenants. Ranges of mountains, high as Ben Nevis or Snowdon, are their walls; and regular armies, with staffs of officers, crossing rivers with artillery, and marching through primeval woods, and threading vast rocky defiles, have been sent out to distrain upon three thousand farmer-tenants of one landlord, at a blow. A fact most suggestive two ways; both whereof shall be nameless here.

But whatever one may think of the existence of such mighty lordships in the heart of a republic, and however we may wonder at their thus surviving, like Indian mounds, the Revolutionary flood; yet survive and exist they do, and are now owned by their present proprietors, by as good nominal title as any peasant owns his father's old hat, or any duke his great-uncle's old coronet.

For all this, then, we shall not err very widely if we humbly conceive, that – should she choose to glorify herself in that inconsiderable way – our America will make out a good general case with England in this short little matter of large estates, and long pedigrees – pedigrees I mean, wherein is no flaw.

IV

IN general terms we have been thus decided in asserting the great genealogical and real-estate dignity of some families in America, because in so doing we poetically establish the richly aristocratic condition of Master Pierre Glendinning, for whom we have before claimed some special family distinction. And to the observant reader the sequel will not fail to show, how important is this circumstance, considered with reference to the singularly developed character and most singular life-career of our hero. Nor will any man dream that the last chapter was merely intended for a foolish bravado, and not with a solid purpose in view.

Now Pierre stands on this noble pedestal; we shall see if he keeps that fine footing; we shall see if Fate hath not just a little bit of a small word or two to say in this world. But it is not laid down here that the Glendinnings dated back beyond Pharaoh, or the deeds of Saddle-Meadows to the Three Magi in the Gospels. Nevertheless, those deeds, as before hinted, did indeed date back to three kings – Indian kings – only so much the finer for that.

But if Pierre did not date back to the Pharaohs, and if the English farmer Hampdens were somewhat the seniors of even the oldest Glendinning; and if some American manors boasted a few additional years and square miles over his, yet think you that it is at all possible, that a youth of nineteen should – merely by way of trial of the thing – strew his ancestral kitchen hearth-stone with wheat in the stalk, and there standing in the chimney thresh out that grain with a flail, whose aerial evolutions had free play among all that masonry; were it not impossible for such a flailer so to thresh wheat in his own ancestral kitchen chimney without feeling just a little twinge or two of what one might call family pride? I should say not.

Or how think you it would be with this youthful Pierre, if every day descending to breakfast, he caught sight of an old tattered British banner or two, hanging over an arched window in his hall; and those banners captured by his grandfather, the general, in fair fight? Or how think you it would be if every time he heard the band of the military company of the village, he should distinctly recognize the peculiar tap of a British kettle-drum also captured by his grandfather in fair fight, and afterwards suitably inscribed on the brass and bestowed upon the Saddle-Meadows Artillery Corps? Or how think you it would be, if sometimes of a mild meditative Fourth of July morning in the country, he carried out with him into the garden by way of ceremonial cane, a long, majestic, silver-tipped

staff, a Major-General's baton, once wielded on the plume-nodding and musket-flashing review by the same grandfather several times here-in-before mentioned? I should say that considering Pierre was quite young and very unphilosophical as yet, and withal rather high-blooded; and sometimes read the History of the Revolutionary War, and possessed a mother who very frequently made remote social allusions to the epaulettes of the Major-General his grandfather; – I should say that upon all of these occasions, the way it must have been with him, was a very proud, elated sort of way. And if this seem but too fond and foolish in Pierre; and if you tell me that this sort of thing in him showed him no sterling Democrat, and that a truly noble man should never brag of any arm but his own; then I beg you to consider again that this Pierre was but a youngster as yet. And believe me you will pronounce Pierre a thoroughgoing Democrat in time; perhaps a little too Radical altogether to your fancy.

In conclusion, do not blame me if I here make repetition, and do verbally quote my own words in saying that *it had been the choice fate of Pierre to have been born and bred in the country*. For to a noble American youth this indeed – more than in any other land – this indeed is a most rare and choice lot. For it is to be observed, that while in other countries, the finest families boast of the country as their home; the more prominent among us, proudly cite the city as their seat. Too often the American that himself makes his fortune, builds him a great metropolitan house, in the most metropolitan street of the most metropolitan town. Whereas a European of the same sort would thereupon migrate into the country. That herein the European hath the better of it, no poet, no philosopher, and no aristocrat will deny. For the country is not only the most poetical and philosophical, but it is the most aristocratic part of this earth, for it is the most venerable, and numerous bards have ennobled it by many fine titles. Whereas the town is the more plebeian portion: which, besides many other things, is plainly evinced by the dirty unwashed face perpetually worn by the town; but the country, like any Queen, is ever attended by scrupulous lady's maids in the guise of the seasons, and the town hath but one dress of brick turned up with stone; but the country hath a brave dress for every week in the year; sometimes she changes her dress twenty-four times in the twenty-four hours; and the country weareth her sun by day as a diamond on a Queen's brow; and the stars by night as necklaces of gold beads; whereas the town's sun is smoky paste, and no diamond, and the town's stars are pinchbeck and not gold.

In the country then Nature planted our Pierre; because Nature intended a rare and original development in Pierre. Never mind if hereby she proved ambiguous to him in the end; nevertheless, in the beginning she did bravely. She blew her wind-clarion from the blue hills, and Pierre neighed out lyrical thoughts, as at the trumpet-blast, a war-horse paws himself into a lyric of foam. She whispered through her deep groves at eve, and gentle whispers of humanness, and sweet whispers of love, ran through Pierre's thought-veins, musical as water over pebbles. She lifted her spangled crest of a thickly-starred night, and forth at that glimpse of their divine Captain and Lord, ten thousand mailed thoughts of heroicness started up in Pierre's soul, and glared round for some insulted good cause to defend.

So the country was a glorious benediction to young Pierre; we shall see if that blessing pass from him as did the divine blessing from the Hebrews; we shall yet see again, I say, whether Fate hath not just a little bit of a word or two to say in this world; we shall see whether this wee little bit scrap of latinity be very far out of the way —*Nemo contra Deum nisi Deus ipse.*

V

"Sister Mary," said Pierre, returned from his sunrise stroll, and tapping at his mother's chamber door: – "do you know, sister Mary, that the trees which have been up all night, are all abroad again this morning before you? – Do you not smell something like coffee, my sister?"

A light step moved from within toward the door; which opened, showing Mrs. Glendinning, in a resplendently cheerful morning robe, and holding a gay wide ribbon in her hand.

"Good morning, madam," said Pierre, slowly, and with a bow, whose genuine and spontaneous reverence amusingly contrasted with the sportive manner that had preceded it. For thus sweetly and religiously was the familiarity of his affections bottomed on the profoundest filial respect.

"Good afternoon to you, Pierre, for I suppose it is afternoon. But come, you shall finish my toilette; – here, brother – " reaching the ribbon – "now acquit yourself bravely – " and seating herself away from the glass, she awaited the good offices of Pierre.

"First Lady in waiting to the Dowager Duchess Glendinning," laughed Pierre, as bowing over before his mother, he gracefully passed the ribbon round her neck, simply crossing the ends in front.

"Well, what is to hold it there, Pierre?"

"I am going to try and tack it with a kiss, sister, – there! – oh, what a pity that sort of fastening won't always hold! – where's the cameo with the fawns, I gave you last night? – Ah! on the slab – you were going to wear it then? – Thank you, my considerate and most politic sister – there! – but stop – here's a ringlet gone romping – so now, dear sister, give that Assyrian toss to your head."

The haughtily happy mother rose to her feet, and as she stood before the mirror to criticize her son's adornings, Pierre, noticing the straggling tie of her slipper, knelt down and secured it. "And now for the urn," he cried, "madam!" and with a humorous gallantry, offering his arm to his mother, the pair descended to breakfast.

With Mrs. Glendinning it was one of those spontaneous maxims, which women sometimes act upon without ever thinking of, never to appear in the presence of her son in any dishabille that was not eminently becoming. Her own independent observation of things, had revealed to her many very common maxims, which often become operatively lifeless from a vicarious reception of them. She was vividly aware how immense was that influence, which, even in the closest ties of the heart, the merest appearances make upon the mind. And as in the admiring love and graceful devotion of Pierre lay now her highest joy in life; so she omitted no slightest trifle which could possibly contribute to the preservation of so sweet and flattering a thing.

Besides all this, Mary Glendinning was a woman, and with more than the ordinary vanity of women – if vanity it can be called – which in a life of nearly fifty years had never betrayed her into a single published impropriety, or caused her one known pang at the heart. Moreover, she had never yearned for admiration; because that was her birthright by the eternal privilege of beauty; she had always possessed it; she had not to turn her head for it, since spontaneously it always encompassed her. Vanity, which in so many women approaches to a spiritual vice, and therefore to a visible blemish; in her peculiar case – and though possessed in a transcendent degree – was still the token of the highest health; inasmuch as never knowing what it was to yearn for its gratification, she was almost entirely unconscious of possessing it at all. Many women carry this light of their lives flaming on their foreheads; but Mary Glendinning unknowingly bore hers within. Through all the infinite traceries of feminine art, she evenly glowed like a vase which, internally illuminated, gives no outward sign of the lighting flame, but seems to shine by the very virtue of the exquisite marble itself. But that bluff corporeal admiration, with which some ball-room women are content, was no admiration to the mother of Pierre. Not the general homage of men, but the selected homage of the noblest men, was what she felt to be her appropriate right. And as her own maternal partialities were added to, and glorified the rare and absolute merits of Pierre; she considered the voluntary allegiance of his affectionate soul, the representative fealty of the choicest guild of his race. Thus, though replenished through all her veins with the subtlest vanity, with the homage of Pierre alone she was content.

But as to a woman of sense and spirit, the admiration of even the noblest and most gifted man, is esteemed as nothing, so long as she remains conscious of possessing no directly influencing and practical sorcery over his soul; and as notwithstanding all his intellectual superiority to his mother, Pierre, through the unavoidable weakness of inexperienced and unexpanded youth, was strangely docile to the maternal tuitions in nearly all the things which thus far had any ways interested or affected him; therefore it was, that to Mary Glendinning this reverence of Pierre was invested

with all the proudest delights and witcheries of self-complacency, which it is possible for the most conquering virgin to feel. Still more. That nameless and infinitely delicate aroma of inexpressible tenderness and attentiveness which, in every refined and honorable attachment, is cotemporary with the courtship, and precedes the final banns and the rite; but which, like the *bouquet* of the costliest German wines, too often evaporates upon pouring love out to drink, in the disenchanting glasses of the matrimonial days and nights; this highest and airiest thing in the whole compass of the experience of our mortal life; this heavenly evanescence – still further etherealized in the filial breast – was for Mary Glendinning, now not very far from her grand climacteric, miraculously revived in the courteous lover-like adoration of Pierre.

Altogether having its origin in a wonderful but purely fortuitous combination of the happiest and rarest accidents of earth; and not to be limited in duration by that climax which is so fatal to ordinary love; this softened spell which still wheeled the mother and son in one orbit of joy, seemed a glimpse of the glorious possibility, that the divinest of those emotions, which are incident to the sweetest season of love, is capable of an indefinite translation into many of the less signal relations of our many chequered life. In a detached and individual way, it seemed almost to realize here below the sweet dreams of those religious enthusiasts, who paint to us a Paradise to come, when etherealized from all drosses and stains, the holiest passion of man shall unite all kindreds and climes in one circle of pure and unimpairable delight.

VI

THERE was one little uncelestial trait, which, in the opinion of some, may mar the romantic merits of the gentlemanly Pierre Glendinning. He always had an excellent appetite, and especially for his breakfast. But when we consider that though Pierre's hands were small, and his ruffles white, yet his arm was by no means dainty, and his complexion inclined to brown; and that he generally rose with the sun, and could not sleep without riding his twenty, or walking his twelve miles a day, or felling a fair-sized hemlock in the forest, or boxing, or fencing, or boating, or performing some other gymnastical feat; when we consider these athletic habitudes of Pierre, and the great fullness of brawn and muscle they built round about him; all of which manly brawn and muscle, three times a day loudly clamored for attention; we shall very soon perceive that to have a bountiful appetite, was not only no vulgar reproach, but a right royal grace and honor to Pierre; attesting him a man and a gentleman; for a thoroughly developed gentleman is always robust and healthy; and Robustness and Health are great trencher-men.

So when Pierre and his mother descended to breakfast, and Pierre had scrupulously seen her supplied with whatever little things were convenient to her; and had twice or thrice ordered the respectable and immemorial Dates, the servitor, to adjust and re-adjust the window-sashes, so that no unkind current of air should take undue liberties with his mother's neck; after seeing to all this, but in a very quiet and inconspicuous way; and also after directing the unruffled Dates, to swing out, horizontally into a particular light, a fine joyous painting, in the good-fellow, Flemish style (which painting was so attached to the wall as to be capable of that mode of adjusting), and furthermore after darting from where he sat a few invigorating glances over the river-meadows to the blue mountains beyond; Pierre made a masonic sort of mysterious motion to the excellent Dates, who in automaton obedience thereto, brought from a certain agreeable little side-stand, a very prominent-looking cold pasty; which, on careful inspection with the knife, proved to be the embossed savory nest of a few uncommonly tender pigeons of Pierre's own shooting.

"Sister Mary," said he, lifting on his silver trident one of the choicest of the many fine pigeon morsels; "Sister Mary," said he, "in shooting these pigeons, I was very careful to bring down one in such a manner that the breast is entirely unmarred. It was intended for you! and here it is. Now Sergeant Dates, help hither your mistress' plate. No? – nothing but the crumbs of French rolls, and a

few peeps into a coffee-cup – is that a breakfast for the daughter of yonder bold General?" – pointing to a full-length of his gold-laced grandfather on the opposite wall. "Well, pitiable is my case when I have to breakfast for two. Dates!"

"Sir."

"Remove that toast-rack, Dates; and this plate of tongue, and bring the rolls nearer, and wheel the stand farther off, good Dates."

Having thus made generous room for himself, Pierre commenced operations, interrupting his mouthfuls by many sallies of mirthfulness.

"You seem to be in prodigious fine spirits this morning, brother Pierre," said his mother.

"Yes, very tolerable; at least I can't say, that I am low-spirited exactly, sister Mary; – Dates, my fine fellow, bring me three bowls of milk."

"One bowl, sir, you mean," said Dates, gravely and imperturbably.

As the servitor left the room, Mrs. Glendinning spoke. "My dear Pierre, how often have I begged you never to permit your hilariousness to betray you into overstepping the exact line of propriety in your intercourse with servants. Dates' look was a respectful reproof to you just now. You must not call Dates, *My fine fellow*. He *is* a fine fellow, a very fine fellow, indeed; but there is no need of telling him so at my table. It is very easy to be entirely kind and pleasant to servants, without the least touch of any shade of transient good-fellowship with them."

"Well, sister, no doubt you are altogether right; after this I shall drop the *fine*, and call Dates nothing but *fellow*; – Fellow, come here! – how will that answer?"

"Not at all, Pierre – but you are a Romeo, you know, and so for the present I pass over your nonsense."

"Romeo! oh, no. I am far from being Romeo – " sighed Pierre. "I laugh, but he cried; poor Romeo! alas Romeo! woe is me, Romeo! he came to a very deplorable end, did Romeo, sister Mary."

"It was his own fault though."

"Poor Romeo!"

"He was disobedient to his parents."

"Alas Romeo!"

"He married against their particular wishes."

"Woe is me, Romeo!"

"But you, Pierre, are going to be married before long, I trust, not to a Capulet, but to one of our own Montagues; and so Romeo's evil fortune will hardly be yours. You will be happy."

"The more miserable Romeo!"

"Don't be so ridiculous, brother Pierre; so you are going to take Lucy that long ride among the hills this morning? She is a sweet girl; a most lovely girl."

"Yes, that is rather my opinion, sister Mary. – By heavens, mother, the five zones hold not such another! She is – yes – though I say it – Dates! – he's a precious long time getting that milk!"

"Let him stay. – Don't be a milk-sop, Pierre!"

"Ha! my sister is a little satirical this morning. I comprehend."

"Never rave, Pierre; and never rant. Your father never did either; nor is it written of Socrates; and both were very wise men. Your father was profoundly in love – that I know to my certain knowledge – but I never heard him rant about it. He was always exceedingly gentlemanly: and gentlemen never rant. Milk-sops and Muggletonians rant, but gentlemen never."

"Thank you, sister. – There, put it down, Dates; are the horses ready?"

"Just driving round, sir, I believe."

"Why, Pierre," said his mother, glancing out at the window, "are you going to Santa Fe De Bogota with that enormous old phaeton; – what do you take that Juggernaut out for?"

"Humor, sister, humor; I like it because it's old-fashioned, and because the seat is such a wide sofa of a seat, and finally because a young lady by the name of Lucy Tartan cherishes a high regard for it. She vows she would like to be married in it."

"Well, Pierre, all I have to say, is, be sure that Christopher puts the coach-hammer and nails, and plenty of cords and screws into the box. And you had better let him follow you in one of the farm wagons, with a spare axle and some boards."

"No fear, sister; no fear; – I shall take the best of care of the old phaeton. The quaint old arms on the panel, always remind me who it was that first rode in it."

"I am glad you have that memory, brother Pierre."

"And who it was that *next* rode in it."

"Bless you! – God bless you, my dear son! – always think of him and you can never err; yes, always think of your dear perfect father, Pierre."

"Well, kiss me now, dear sister, for I must go."

"There; this is my cheek, and the other is Lucy's; though now that I look at them both, I think that hers is getting to be the most blooming; sweeter dews fall on that one, I suppose."

Pierre laughed, and ran out of the room, for old Christopher was getting impatient. His mother went to the window and stood there.

"A noble boy, and docile" – she murmured – "he has all the frolicsomeness of youth, with little of its giddiness. And he does not grow vain-glorious in sophomorean wisdom. I thank heaven I sent him not to college. A noble boy, and docile. A fine, proud, loving, docile, vigorous boy. Pray God, he never becomes otherwise to me. His little wife, that is to be, will not estrange him from me; for she too is docile, – beautiful, and reverential, and most docile. Seldom yet have I known such blue eyes as hers, that were not docile, and would not follow a bold black one, as two meek blue-ribboned ewes, follow their martial leader. How glad am I that Pierre loves her so, and not some dark-eyed haughtiness, with whom I could never live in peace; but who would be ever setting her young married state before my elderly widowed one, and claiming all the homage of my dear boy – the fine, proud, loving, docile, vigorous boy! – the lofty-minded, well-born, noble boy; and with such sweet docilities! See his hair! He does in truth illustrate that fine saying of his father's, that as the noblest colts, in three points – abundant hair, swelling chest, and sweet docility – should resemble a fine woman, so should a noble youth. Well, good-bye, Pierre, and a merry morning to ye!"

So saying she crossed the room, and – resting in a corner – her glad proud eye met the old General's baton, which the day before in one of his frolic moods Pierre had taken from its accustomed place in the pictured-bannered hall. She lifted it, and musingly swayed it to and fro; then paused, and staff-wise rested with it in her hand. Her stately beauty had ever somewhat martial in it; and now she looked the daughter of a General, as she was; for Pierre's was a double revolutionary descent. On both sides he sprang from heroes.

"This is his inheritance – this symbol of command! and I swell out to think it. Yet but just now I fondled the conceit that Pierre was so sweetly docile! Here sure is a most strange inconsistency! For is sweet docility a general's badge? and is this baton but a distaff then? – Here's something widely wrong. Now I almost wish him otherwise than sweet and docile to me, seeing that it must be hard for man to be an uncompromising hero and a commander among his race, and yet never ruffle any domestic brow. Pray heaven he show his heroicness in some smooth way of favoring fortune, not be called out to be a hero of some dark hope forlorn; – of some dark hope forlorn, whose cruelness makes a savage of a man. Give him, O God, regardful gales! Fan him with unwavering prosperities! So shall he remain all docility to me, and yet prove a haughty hero to the world!"

BOOK II.
LOVE, DELIGHT, AND ALARM

I

ON the previous evening, Pierre had arranged with Lucy the plan of a long winding ride, among the hills which stretched around to the southward from the wide plains of Saddle-Meadows.

Though the vehicle was a sexagenarian, the animals that drew it, were but six-year colts. The old phaeton had outlasted several generations of its drawers.

Pierre rolled beneath the village elms in billowy style, and soon drew up before the white cottage door. Flinging his reins upon the ground he entered the house.

The two colts were his particular and confidential friends; born on the same land with him, and fed with the same corn, which, in the form of Indian-cakes, Pierre himself was often wont to eat for breakfast. The same fountain that by one branch supplied the stables with water, by another supplied Pierre's pitcher. They were a sort of family cousins to Pierre, those horses; and they were splendid young cousins; very showy in their redundant manes and mighty paces, but not at all vain or arrogant. They acknowledged Pierre as the undoubted head of the house of Glendinning. They well knew that they were but an inferior and subordinate branch of the Glendinnings, bound in perpetual feudal fealty to its headmost representative. Therefore, these young cousins never permitted themselves to run from Pierre; they were impatient in their paces, but very patient in the halt. They were full of good-humor too, and kind as kittens.

"Bless me, how can you let them stand all alone that way, Pierre," cried Lucy, as she and Pierre stepped forth from the cottage door, Pierre laden with shawls, parasol, reticule, and a small hamper.

"Wait a bit," cried Pierre, dropping his load; "I will show you what my colts are."

So saying, he spoke to them mildly, and went close up to them, and patted them. The colts neighed; the nigh colt neighing a little jealously, as if Pierre had not patted impartially. Then, with a low, long, almost inaudible whistle, Pierre got between the colts, among the harness. Whereat Lucy started, and uttered a faint cry, but Pierre told her to keep perfectly quiet, for there was not the least danger in the world. And Lucy did keep quiet; for somehow, though she always started when Pierre seemed in the slightest jeopardy, yet at bottom she rather cherished a notion that Pierre bore a charmed life, and by no earthly possibility could die from her, or experience any harm, when she was within a thousand leagues.

Pierre, still between the horses, now stepped upon the pole of the phaeton; then stepping down, indefinitely disappeared, or became partially obscured among the living colonnade of the horses' eight slender and glossy legs. He entered the colonnade one way, and after a variety of meanderings, came out another way; during all of which equestrian performance, the two colts kept gayly neighing, and good-humoredly moving their heads perpendicularly up and down; and sometimes turning them sideways toward Lucy; as much as to say – We understand young master; we understand him, Miss; never fear, pretty lady: why, bless your delicious little heart, we played with Pierre before you ever did.

"Are you afraid of their running away now, Lucy?" said Pierre, returning to her.

"Not much, Pierre; the superb fellows! Why, Pierre, they have made an officer of you – look!" and she pointed to two foam-flakes epauletting his shoulders. "Bravissimo again! I called you my recruit, when you left my window this morning, and here you are promoted."

"Very prettily conceited, Lucy. But see, you don't admire their coats; they wear nothing but the finest Genoa velvet, Lucy. See! did you ever see such well-groomed horses?"

"Never!"

"Then what say you to have them for my groomsmen, Lucy? Glorious groomsmen they would make, I declare. They should have a hundred ells of white favors all over their manes and tails; and when they drew us to church, they would be still all the time scattering white favors from their mouths, just as they did here on me. Upon my soul, they shall be my groomsmen, Lucy. Stately stags! playful dogs! heroes, Lucy. We shall have no marriage bells; they shall neigh for us, Lucy; we shall be wedded to the martial sound of Job's trumpeters, Lucy. Hark! they are neighing now to think of it."

"Neighing at your lyrics, Pierre. Come, let us be off. Here, the shawl, the parasol, the basket: what are you looking at them so for?"

"I was thinking, Lucy, of the sad state I am in. Not six months ago, I saw a poor affianced fellow, an old comrade of mine, trudging along with his Lucy Tartan, a hillock of bundles under either arm; and I said to myself – There goes a sumpter, now; poor devil, he's a lover. And now look at me! Well, life's a burden, they say; why not be burdened cheerily? But look ye, Lucy, I am going to enter a formal declaration and protest before matters go further with us. When we are married, I am not to carry any bundles, unless in cases of real need; and what is more, when there are any of your young lady acquaintances in sight, I am not to be unnecessarily called upon to back up, and load for their particular edification."

"Now I am really vexed with you, Pierre; that is the first ill-natured innuendo I ever heard from you. Are there any of my young lady acquaintances in sight now, I should like to know?"

"Six of them, right over the way," said Pierre; "but they keep behind the curtains. I never trust your solitary village streets, Lucy. Sharp-shooters behind every clap-board, Lucy."

"Pray, then, dear Pierre, do let us be off!"

II

WHILE Pierre and Lucy are now rolling along under the elms, let it be said who Lucy Tartan was. It is needless to say that she was a beauty; because chestnut-haired, bright-cheeked youths like Pierre Glendinning, seldom fall in love with any but a beauty. And in the times to come, there must be – as in the present times, and in the times gone by – some splendid men, and some transcendent women; and how can they ever be, unless always, throughout all time, here and there, a handsome youth weds with a handsome maid!

But though owing to the above-named provisions of dame Nature, there always will be beautiful women in the world; yet the world will never see another Lucy Tartan. Her cheeks were tinted with the most delicate white and red, the white predominating. Her eyes some god brought down from heaven; her hair was Danae's, spangled with Jove's shower; her teeth were dived for in the Persian Sea.

If long wont to fix his glance on those who, trudging through the humbler walks of life, and whom unequal toil and poverty deform; if that man shall haply view some fair and gracious daughter of the gods, who, from unknown climes of loveliness and affluence, comes floating into sight, all symmetry and radiance; how shall he be transported, that in a world so full of vice and misery as ours, there should yet shine forth this visible semblance of the heavens. For a lovely woman is not entirely of this earth. Her own sex regard her not as such. A crowd of women eye a transcendent beauty entering a room, much as though a bird from Arabia had lighted on the window sill. Say what you will, their jealousy – if any – is but an afterbirth to their open admiration. Do men envy the gods? And shall women envy the goddesses? A beautiful woman is born Queen of men and women both, as Mary Stuart was born Queen of Scots, whether men or women. All mankind are her Scots; her leal clans are numbered by the nations. A true gentleman in Kentucky would cheerfully die for a beautiful woman in Hindostan, though he never saw her. Yea, count down his heart in death-drops for her; and go to Pluto, that she might go to Paradise. He would turn Turk before he would disown an allegiance hereditary to all gentlemen, from the hour their Grand Master, Adam, first knelt to Eve.

A plain-faced Queen of Spain dwells not in half the glory a beautiful milliner does. Her soldiers can break heads, but her Highness can not crack a heart; and the beautiful milliner might string hearts for necklaces. Undoubtedly, Beauty made the first Queen. If ever again the succession to the German Empire should be contested, and one poor lame lawyer should present the claims of the first excellingly beautiful woman he chanced to see – she would thereupon be unanimously elected Empress of the Holy Roman German Empire; – that is to say, if all the Germans were true, free-hearted and magnanimous gentlemen, at all capable of appreciating so immense an honor.

It is nonsense to talk of France as the seat of all civility. Did not those French heathen have a Salique law? Three of the most bewitching creatures, – immortal flowers of the line of Valois – were excluded from the French throne by that infamous provision. France, indeed! whose Catholic millions still worship Mary Queen of Heaven; and for ten generations refused cap and knee to many angel Maries, rightful Queens of France. Here is cause for universal war. See how vilely nations, as well as men, assume and wear unchallenged the choicest titles, however without merit. The Americans, and not the French, are the world's models of chivalry. Our Salique Law provides that universal homage shall be paid all beautiful women. No man's most solid rights shall weigh against her airiest whims. If you buy the best seat in the coach, to go and consult a doctor on a matter of life and death, you shall cheerfully abdicate that best seat, and limp away on foot, if a pretty woman, traveling, shake one feather from the stage-house door.

Now, since we began by talking of a certain young lady that went out riding with a certain youth; and yet find ourselves, after leading such a merry dance, fast by a stage-house window; – this may seem rather irregular sort of writing. But whither indeed should Lucy Tartan conduct us, but among mighty Queens, and all other creatures of high degree; and finally set us roaming, to see whether the wide world can match so fine a wonder. By immemorial usage, am I not bound to celebrate this Lucy Tartan? Who shall stay me? Is she not my hero's own affianced? What can be gainsaid? Where underneath the tester of the night sleeps such another?

Yet, how would Lucy Tartan shrink from all this noise and clatter! She is bragged of, but not brags. Thus far she hath floated as stilly through this life, as thistle-down floats over meadows. Noiseless, she, except with Pierre; and even with him she lives through many a panting hush. Oh, those love-pauses that they know – how ominous of their future; for pauses precede the earthquake, and every other terrible commotion! But blue be their sky awhile, and lightsome all their chat, and frolicsome their humors.

Never shall I get down the vile inventory! How, if with paper and with pencil I went out into the starry night to inventorize the heavens? Who shall tell stars as teaspoons? Who shall put down the charms of Lucy Tartan upon paper?

And for the rest; her parentage, what fortune she would possess, how many dresses in her wardrobe, and how many rings upon her fingers; cheerfully would I let the genealogists, tax-gatherers, and upholsterers attend to that. My proper province is with the angelical part of Lucy. But as in some quarters, there prevails a sort of prejudice against angels, who are merely angels and nothing more; therefore I shall martyrize myself, by letting such gentlemen and ladies into some details of Lucy Tartan's history.

She was the daughter of an early and most cherished friend of Pierre's father. But that father was now dead, and she resided an only daughter with her mother, in a very fine house in the city. But though her home was in the city, her heart was twice a year in the country. She did not at all love the city and its empty, heartless, ceremonial ways. It was very strange, but most eloquently significant of her own natural angelhood that, though born among brick and mortar in a sea-port, she still pined for unbaked earth and inland grass. So the sweet linnet, though born inside of wires in a lady's chamber on the ocean coast, and ignorant all its life of any other spot; yet, when spring-time comes, it is seized with flutterings and vague impatiences; it can not eat or drink for these wild longings. Though unlearned by any experience, still the inspired linnet divinely knows that the inland

migrating time has come. And just so with Lucy in her first longings for the verdure. Every spring those wild flutterings shook her; every spring, this sweet linnet girl did migrate inland. Oh God grant that those other and long after nameless flutterings of her inmost soul, when all life was become weary to her – God grant, that those deeper flutterings in her were equally significant of her final heavenly migration from this heavy earth.

It was fortunate for Lucy that her Aunt Lanyllyn – a pensive, childless, white-turbaned widow – possessed and occupied a pretty cottage in the village of Saddle Meadows; and still more fortunate, that this excellent old aunt was very partial to her, and always felt a quiet delight in having Lucy near her. So Aunt Lanyllyn's cottage, in effect, was Lucy's. And now, for some years past, she had annually spent several months at Saddle Meadows; and it was among the pure and soft incitements of the country that Pierre first had felt toward Lucy the dear passion which now made him wholly hers.

Lucy had two brothers; one her senior, by three years, and the other her junior by two. But these young men were officers in the navy; and so they did not permanently live with Lucy and her mother.

Mrs. Tartan was mistress of an ample fortune. She was, moreover, perfectly aware that such was the fact, and was somewhat inclined to force it upon the notice of other people, nowise interested in the matter. In other words, Mrs. Tartan, instead of being daughter-proud, for which she had infinite reason, was a little inclined to being purse-proud, for which she had not the slightest reason; seeing that the Great Mogul probably possessed a larger fortune than she, not to speak of the Shah of Persia and Baron Rothschild, and a thousand other millionaires; whereas, the Grand Turk, and all their other majesties of Europe, Asia, and Africa to boot, could not, in all their joint dominions, boast so sweet a girl as Lucy. Nevertheless, Mrs. Tartan was an excellent sort of lady, as this lady-like world goes. She subscribed to charities, and owned five pews in as many churches, and went about trying to promote the general felicity of the world, by making all the handsome young people of her acquaintance marry one another. In other words, she was a match-maker – not a Lucifer match-maker – though, to tell the truth, she may have kindled the matrimonial blues in certain dissatisfied gentlemen's breasts, who had been wedded under her particular auspices, and by her particular advice. Rumor said – but rumor is always fibbing – that there was a secret society of dissatisfied young husbands, who were at the pains of privately circulating handbills among all unmarried young strangers, warning them against the insidious approaches of Mrs. Tartan; and, for reference, named themselves in cipher. But this could not have been true; for, flushed with a thousand matches – burning blue or bright, it made little matter – Mrs. Tartan sailed the seas of fashion, causing all topsails to lower to her; and towing flotillas of young ladies, for all of whom she was bound to find the finest husband harbors in the world.

But does not match-making, like charity, begin at home? Why is her own daughter Lucy without a mate? But not so fast; Mrs. Tartan years ago laid out that sweet programme concerning Pierre and Lucy; but in this case, her programme happened to coincide, in some degree, with a previous one in heaven, and only for that cause did it come to pass, that Pierre Glendinning was the proud elect of Lucy Tartan. Besides, this being a thing so nearly affecting herself, Mrs. Tartan had, for the most part, been rather circumspect and cautious in all her manœuvrings with Pierre and Lucy. Moreover, the thing demanded no manœuvring at all. The two Platonic particles, after roaming in quest of each other, from the time of Saturn and Ops till now; they came together before Mrs. Tartan's own eyes; and what more could Mrs. Tartan do toward making them forever one and indivisible? Once, and only once, had a dim suspicion passed through Pierre's mind, that Mrs. Tartan was a lady thimble-rigger, and slyly rolled the pea.

In their less mature acquaintance, he was breakfasting with Lucy and her mother in the city, and the first cup of coffee had been poured out by Mrs. Tartan, when she declared she smelt matches burning somewhere in the house, and she must see them extinguished. So banning all pursuit, she rose to seek for the burning matches, leaving the pair alone to interchange the civilities of the coffee; and finally sent word to them, from above stairs, that the matches, or something else, had given her

a headache, and begged Lucy to send her up some toast and tea, for she would breakfast in her own chamber that morning.

Upon this, Pierre looked from Lucy to his boots, and as he lifted his eyes again, saw Anacreon on the sofa on one side of him, and Moore's Melodies on the other, and some honey on the table, and a bit of white satin on the floor, and a sort of bride's veil on the chandelier.

Never mind though – thought Pierre, fixing his gaze on Lucy – I'm entirely willing to be caught, when the bait is set in Paradise, and the bait is such an angel. Again he glanced at Lucy, and saw a look of infinite subdued vexation, and some unwonted pallor on her cheek. Then willingly he would have kissed the delicious bait, that so gently hated to be tasted in the trap. But glancing round again, and seeing that the music, which Mrs. Tartan, under the pretense of putting in order, had been adjusting upon the piano; seeing that this music was now in a vertical pile against the wall, with – "*Love was once a little boy*," for the outermost and only visible sheet; and thinking this to be a remarkable coincidence under the circumstances; Pierre could not refrain from a humorous smile, though it was a very gentle one, and immediately repented of, especially as Lucy seeing and interpreting it, immediately arose, with an unaccountable, indignant, angelical, adorable, and all-persuasive "Mr. Glendinning?" utterly confounded in him the slightest germ of suspicion as to Lucy's collusion in her mother's imagined artifices.

Indeed, Mrs. Tartan's having any thing whatever to do, or hint, or finesse in this matter of the loves of Pierre and Lucy, was nothing less than immensely gratuitous and sacrilegious. Would Mrs. Tartan doctor lilies when they blow? Would Mrs. Tartan set about match-making between the steel and magnet? Preposterous Mrs. Tartan! But this whole world is a preposterous one, with many preposterous people in it; chief among whom was Mrs. Tartan, match-maker to the nation.

This conduct of Mrs. Tartan, was the more absurd, seeing that she could not but know that Mrs. Glendinning desired the thing. And was not Lucy wealthy? – going to be, that is, very wealthy when her mother died; – (sad thought that for Mrs. Tartan) – and was not her husband's family of the best; and had not Lucy's father been a bosom friend of Pierre's father? And though Lucy might be matched to some one man, where among women was the match for Lucy? Exceedingly preposterous Mrs. Tartan! But when a lady like Mrs. Tartan has nothing positive and useful to do, then she will do just such preposterous things as Mrs. Tartan did.

Well, time went on; and Pierre loved Lucy, and Lucy, Pierre; till at last the two young naval gentlemen, her brothers, happened to arrive in Mrs. Tartan's drawing-room, from their first cruise – a three years' one up the Mediterranean. They rather stared at Pierre, finding him on the sofa, and Lucy not very remote.

"Pray, be seated, gentlemen," said Pierre. "Plenty of room."

"My darling brothers!" cried Lucy, embracing them.

"My darling brothers and sister!" cried Pierre, folding them together.

"Pray, hold off, sir," said the elder brother, who had served as a passed midshipman for the last two weeks. The younger brother retreated a little, and clapped his hand upon his dirk, saying, "Sir, we are from the Mediterranean. Sir, permit me to say, this is decidedly improper! Who may you be, sir?"

"I can't explain for joy," cried Pierre, hilariously embracing them all again.

"Most extraordinary!" cried the elder brother, extricating his shirt-collar from the embrace, and pulling it up vehemently.

"Draw!" cried the younger, intrepidly.

"Peace, foolish fellows," cried Lucy – "this is your old play-fellow, Pierre Glendinning."

"Pierre? why, Pierre?" cried the lads – "a hug all round again! You've grown a fathom! – who would have known you? But, then – Lucy? I say, Lucy? – what business have you here in this – eh? eh? – hugging-match, I should call it?"

"Oh! Lucy don't mean any thing," cried Pierre – "come, one more all round."

So they all embraced again; and that evening it was publicly known that Pierre was to wed with Lucy.

Whereupon, the young officers took it upon themselves to think – though they by no means presumed to breathe it – that they had authoritatively, though indirectly, accelerated a before ambiguous and highly incommendable state of affairs between the now affianced lovers.

III

IN the fine old robust times of Pierre's grandfather, an American gentleman of substantial person and fortune spent his time in a somewhat different style from the green-house gentlemen of the present day. The grandfather of Pierre measured six feet four inches in height; during a fire in the old manorial mansion, with one dash of his foot, he had smitten down an oaken door, to admit the buckets of his negro slaves; Pierre had often tried on his military vest, which still remained an heirloom at Saddle Meadows, and found the pockets below his knees, and plenty additional room for a fair-sized quarter-cask within its buttoned girth; in a night-scuffle in the wilderness before the Revolutionary War, he had annihilated two Indian savages by making reciprocal bludgeons of their heads. And all this was done by the mildest hearted, and most blue-eyed gentleman in the world, who, according to the patriarchal fashion of those days, was a gentle, white-haired worshiper of all the household gods; the gentlest husband, and the gentlest father; the kindest of masters to his slaves; of the most wonderful unruffledness of temper; a serene smoker of his after-dinner pipe; a forgiver of many injuries; a sweet-hearted, charitable Christian; in fine, a pure, cheerful, child-like, blue-eyed, divine old man; in whose meek, majestic soul, the lion and the lamb embraced – fit image of his God.

Never could Pierre look upon his fine military portrait without an infinite and mournful longing to meet his living aspect in actual life. The majestic sweetness of this portrait was truly wonderful in its effects upon any sensitive and generous-minded young observer. For such, that portrait possessed the heavenly persuasiveness of angelic speech; a glorious gospel framed and hung upon the wall, and declaring to all people, as from the Mount, that man is a noble, god-like being, full of choicest juices; made up of strength and beauty.

Now, this grand old Pierre Glendinning was a great lover of horses; but not in the modern sense, for he was no jockey; – one of his most intimate friends of the masculine gender was a huge, proud, gray horse, of a surprising reserve of manner, his saddle-beast; he had his horses' mangers carved like old trenchers, out of solid maple logs; the key of the corn-bin hung in his library; and no one grained his steeds, but himself; unless his absence from home promoted Moyar, an incorruptible and most punctual old black, to that honorable office. He said that no man loved his horses, unless his own hands grained them. Every Christmas he gave them brimming measures. "I keep Christmas with my horses," said grand old Pierre. This grand old Pierre always rose at sunrise; washed his face and chest in the open air; and then, returning to his closet, and being completely arrayed at last, stepped forth to make a ceremonious call at his stables, to bid his very honorable friends there a very good and joyful morning. Woe to Cranz, Kit, Douw, or any other of his stable slaves, if grand old Pierre found one horse unblanketed, or one weed among the hay that filled their rack. Not that he ever had Cranz, Kit, Douw, or any of them flogged – a thing unknown in that patriarchal time and country – but he would refuse to say his wonted pleasant word to them; and that was very bitter to them, for Cranz, Kit, Douw, and all of them, loved grand old Pierre, as his shepherds loved old Abraham.

What decorous, lordly, gray-haired steed is this? What old Chaldean rides abroad? – 'Tis grand old Pierre; who, every morning before he eats, goes out promenading with his saddle-beast; nor mounts him, without first asking leave. But time glides on, and grand old Pierre grows old: his life's glorious grape now swells with fatness; he has not the conscience to saddle his majestic beast with such a mighty load of manliness. Besides, the noble beast himself is growing old, and has a touching look of meditativeness in his large, attentive eyes. Leg of man, swears grand old Pierre, shall never

more bestride my steed; no more shall harness touch him! Then every spring he sowed a field with clover for his steed; and at mid-summer sorted all his meadow grasses, for the choicest hay to winter him; and had his destined grain thrashed out with a flail, whose handle had once borne a flag in a brisk battle, into which this same old steed had pranced with grand old Pierre; one waving mane, one waving sword!

Now needs must grand old Pierre take a morning drive; he rides no more with the old gray steed. He has a phaeton built, fit for a vast General, in whose sash three common men might hide. Doubled, trebled are the huge S shaped leather springs; the wheels seem stolen from some mill; the canopied seat is like a testered bed. From beneath the old archway, not one horse, but two, every morning now draw forth old Pierre, as the Chinese draw their fat god Josh, once every year from out his fane.

But time glides on, and a morning comes, when the phaeton emerges not; but all the yards and courts are full; helmets line the ways; sword-points strike the stone steps of the porch; muskets ring upon the stairs; and mournful martial melodies are heard in all the halls. Grand old Pierre is dead; and like a hero of old battles, he dies on the eve of another war; ere wheeling to fire on the foe, his platoons fire over their old commander's grave; in A. D. 1812, died grand old Pierre. The drum that beat in brass his funeral march, was a British kettle-drum, that had once helped beat the vain-glorious march, for the thirty thousand predestined prisoners, led into sure captivity by that bragging boy, Burgoyne.

Next day the old gray steed turned from his grain; turned round, and vainly whinnied in his stall. By gracious Moyar's hand, he refuses to be patted now; plain as horse can speak, the old gray steed says – "I smell not the wonted hand; where is grand old Pierre? Grain me not, and groom me not; – Where is grand old Pierre?"

He sleeps not far from his master now; beneath the field he cropt, he has softly lain him down; and long ere this, grand old Pierre and steed have passed through that grass to glory.

But his phaeton – like his plumed hearse, outlives the noble load it bore. And the dark bay steeds that drew grand old Pierre alive, and by his testament drew him dead, and followed the lordly lead of the led gray horse; those dark bay steeds are still extant; not in themselves or in their issue; but in the two descendants of stallions of their own breed. For on the lands of Saddle Meadows, man and horse are both hereditary; and this bright morning Pierre Glendinning, grandson of grand old Pierre, now drives forth with Lucy Tartan, seated where his own ancestor had sat, and reining steeds, whose great-great-great-grandfathers grand old Pierre had reined before.

How proud felt Pierre: In fancy's eye, he saw the horse-ghosts a-tandem in the van; "These are but wheelers" – cried young Pierre – "the leaders are the generations."

IV

BUT Love has more to do with his own possible and probable posterities, than with the once living but now impossible ancestries in the past. So Pierre's glow of family pride quickly gave place to a deeper hue, when Lucy bade love's banner blush out from his cheek.

That morning was the choicest drop that Time had in his vase. Ineffable distillations of a soft delight were wafted from the fields and hills. Fatal morning that, to all lovers unbetrothed; "Come to your confessional," it cried. "Behold our airy loves," the birds chirped from the trees; far out at sea, no more the sailors tied their bowline-knots; their hands had lost their cunning; will they, nill they, Love tied love-knots on every spangled spar.

Oh, praised be the beauty of this earth, the beauty, and the bloom, and the mirthfulness thereof! The first worlds made were winter worlds; the second made, were vernal worlds; the third, and last, and perfectest, was this summer world of ours. In the cold and nether spheres, preachers preach of earth, as we of Paradise above. Oh, there, my friends, they say, they have a season, in their language known as summer. Then their fields spin themselves green carpets; snow and ice are not in all the land; then a million strange, bright, fragrant things powder that sward with perfumes; and high, majestic

beings, dumb and grand, stand up with outstretched arms, and hold their green canopies over merry angels – men and women – who love and wed, and sleep and dream, beneath the approving glances of their visible god and goddess, glad-hearted sun, and pensive moon!

Oh, praised be the beauty of this earth; the beauty, and the bloom, and the mirthfulness thereof. We lived before, and shall live again; and as we hope for a fairer world than this to come; so we came from one less fine. From each successive world, the demon Principle is more and more dislodged; he is the accursed clog from chaos, and thither, by every new translation, we drive him further and further back again. Hosannahs to this world! so beautiful itself, and the vestibule to more. Out of some past Egypt, we have come to this new Canaan; and from this new Canaan, we press on to some Circassia. Though still the villains, Want and Woe, followed us out of Egypt, and now beg in Canaan's streets: yet Circassia's gates shall not admit them; they, with their sire, the demon Principle, must back to chaos, whence they came.

Love was first begot by Mirth and Peace, in Eden, when the world was young. The man oppressed with cares, he can not love; the man of gloom finds not the god. So, as youth, for the most part, has no cares, and knows no gloom, therefore, ever since time did begin, youth belongs to love. Love may end in grief and age, and pain and need, and all other modes of human mournfulness; but love begins in joy. Love's first sigh is never breathed, till after love hath laughed. Love laughs first, and then sighs after. Love has not hands, but cymbals; Love's mouth is chambered like a bugle, and the instinctive breathings of his life breathe jubilee notes of joy!

That morning, two bay horses drew two Laughs along the road that led to the hills from Saddle Meadows. Apt time they kept; Pierre Glendinning's young, manly tenor, to Lucy Tartan's girlish treble.

Wondrous fair of face, blue-eyed, and golden-haired, the bright blonde, Lucy, was arrayed in colors harmonious with the heavens. Light blue be thy perpetual color, Lucy; light blue becomes thee best – such the repeated azure counsel of Lucy Tartan's mother. On both sides, from the hedges, came to Pierre the clover bloom of Saddle Meadows, and from Lucy's mouth and cheek came the fresh fragrance of her violet young being.

"Smell I the flowers, or thee?" cried Pierre.

"See I lakes, or eyes?" cried Lucy, her own gazing down into his soul, as two stars gaze down into a tarn.

No Cornwall miner ever sunk so deep a shaft beneath the sea, as Love will sink beneath the floatings of the eyes. Love sees ten million fathoms down, till dazzled by the floor of pearls. The eye is Love's own magic glass, where all things that are not of earth, glide in supernatural light. There are not so many fishes in the sea, as there are sweet images in lovers' eyes. In those miraculous translucencies swim the strange eye-fish with wings, that sometimes leap out, instinct with joy; moist fish-wings wet the lover's cheek. Love's eyes are holy things; therein the mysteries of life are lodged; looking in each other's eyes, lovers see the ultimate secret of the worlds; and with thrills eternally untranslatable, feel that Love is god of all. Man or woman who has never loved, nor once looked deep down into their own lover's eyes, they know not the sweetest and the loftiest religion of this earth. Love is both Creator's and Saviour's gospel to mankind; a volume bound in rose-leaves, clasped with violets, and by the beaks of humming-birds printed with peach-juice on the leaves of lilies.

Endless is the account of Love. Time and space can not contain Love's story. All things that are sweet to see, or taste, or feel, or hear, all these things were made by Love; and none other things were made by Love. Love made not the Arctic zones, but Love is ever reclaiming them. Say, are not the fierce things of this earth daily, hourly going out? Where now are your wolves of Britain? Where in Virginia now, find you the panther and the pard? Oh, love is busy everywhere. Everywhere Love hath Moravian missionaries. No Propagandist like to love. The south wind wooes the barbarous north; on many a distant shore the gentler west wind persuades the arid east.

All this Earth is Love's affianced; vainly the demon Principle howls to stay the banns. Why round her middle wears this world so rich a zone of torrid verdure, if she be not dressing for the final rites? And why provides she orange blossoms and lilies of the valley, if she would not that all men and maids should love and marry? For every wedding where true lovers wed, helps on the march of universal Love. Who are brides here shall be Love's bridemaids in the marriage world to come. So on all sides Love allures; can contain himself what youth who views the wonders of the beauteous woman-world? Where a beautiful woman is, there is all Asia and her Bazars. Italy hath not a sight before the beauty of a Yankee girl; nor heaven a blessing beyond her earthly love. Did not the angelical Lotharios come down to earth, that they might taste of mortal woman's Love and Beauty? even while her own silly brothers were pining after the self-same Paradise they left? Yes, those envying angels did come down; did emigrate; and who emigrates except to be better off?

Love is this world's great redeemer and reformer; and as all beautiful women are her selectest emissaries, so hath Love gifted them with a magnetical persuasiveness, that no youth can possibly repel. The own heart's choice of every youth, seems ever as an inscrutable witch to him; and by ten thousand concentric spells and circling incantations, glides round and round him, as he turns: murmuring meanings of unearthly import; and summoning up to him all the subterranean sprites and gnomes; and unpeopling all the sea for naiads to swim round him; so that mysteries are evoked as in exhalations by this Love; – what wonder then that Love was aye a mystic?

V

AND this self-same morning Pierre was very mystical; not continually, though; but most mystical one moment, and overflowing with mad, unbridled merriment, the next. He seemed a youthful Magian, and almost a mountebank together. Chaldaic improvisations burst from him, in quick Golden Verses, on the heel of humorous retort and repartee. More especially, the bright glance of Lucy was transporting to him. Now, reckless of his horses, with both arms holding Lucy in his embrace, like a Sicilian diver he dives deep down in the Adriatic of her eyes, and brings up some king's-cup of joy. All the waves in Lucy's eyes seemed waves of infinite glee to him. And as if, like veritable seas, they did indeed catch the reflected irradiations of that pellucid azure morning; in Lucy's eyes, there seemed to shine all the blue glory of the general day, and all the sweet inscrutableness of the sky. And certainly, the blue eye of woman, like the sea, is not uninfluenced by the atmosphere. Only in the open air of some divinest, summer day, will you see its ultramarine, – its fluid lapis lazuli. Then would Pierre burst forth in some screaming shout of joy; and the striped tigers of his chestnut eyes leaped in their lashed cages with a fierce delight. Lucy shrank from him in extreme love; for the extremest top of love, is Fear and Wonder.

Soon the swift horses drew this fair god and goddess nigh the wooded hills, whose distant blue, now changed into a variously-shaded green, stood before them like old Babylonian walls, overgrown with verdure; while here and there, at regular intervals, the scattered peaks seemed mural towers; and the clumped pines surmounting them, as lofty archers, and vast, out-looking watchers of the glorious Babylonian City of the Day. Catching that hilly air, the prancing horses neighed; laughed on the ground with gleeful feet. Felt they the gay delightsome spurrings of the day; for the day was mad with excessive joy; and high in heaven you heard the neighing of the horses of the sun; and down dropt their nostrils' froth in many a fleecy vapor from the hills.

From the plains, the mists rose slowly; reluctant yet to quit so fair a mead. At those green slopings, Pierre reined in his steeds, and soon the twain were seated on the bank, gazing far, and far away; over many a grove and lake; corn-crested uplands, and Herd's-grass lowlands; and long-stretching swales of vividest green, betokening where the greenest bounty of this earth seeks its winding channels; as ever, the most heavenly bounteousness most seeks the lowly places; making

green and glad many a humble mortal's breast, and leaving to his own lonely aridness, many a hill-top prince's state.

But Grief, not Joy, is a moralizer; and small moralizing wisdom caught Pierre from that scene. With Lucy's hand in his, and feeling, softly feeling of its soft tinglingness; he seemed as one placed in linked correspondence with the summer lightnings; and by sweet shock on shock, receiving intimating fore-tastes of the etherealest delights of earth.

Now, prone on the grass he falls, with his attentive upward glance fixed on Lucy's eyes. "Thou art my heaven, Lucy; and here I lie thy shepherd-king, watching for new eye-stars to rise in thee. Ha! I see Venus' transit now; – lo! a new planet there; – and behind all, an infinite starry nebulousness, as if thy being were backgrounded by some spangled vail of mystery."

Is Lucy deaf to all these ravings of his lyric love? Why looks she down, and vibrates so; and why now from her over-charged lids, drops such warm drops as these? No joy now in Lucy's eyes, and seeming tremor on her lips.

"Ah! thou too ardent and impetuous Pierre!"

"Nay, thou too moist and changeful April! know'st thou not, that the moist and changeful April is followed by the glad, assured, and showerless joy of June? And this, Lucy, this day should be thy June, even as it is the earth's?"

"Ah Pierre! not June to me. But say, are not the sweets of June made sweet by the April tears?"

"Ay, love! but here fall more drops, – more and more; – these showers are longer than beseem the April, and pertain not to the June."

"June! June! – thou bride's month of the summer, – following the spring's sweet courtship of the earth, – my June, my June is yet to come!"

"Oh! yet to come, but fixedly decreed; – good as come, and better."

"Then no flower that, in the bud, the April showers have nurtured; no such flower may untimely perish, ere the June unfolds it? Ye will not swear that, Pierre?"

"The audacious immortalities of divinest love are in me; and I now swear to thee all the immutable eternities of joyfulness, that ever woman dreamed of, in this dream-house of the earth. A god decrees to thee unchangeable felicity; and to me, the unchallenged possession of thee and them, for my inalienable fief. – Do I rave? Look on me, Lucy; think on me, girl."

"Thou art young, and beautiful, and strong; and a joyful manliness invests thee, Pierre; and thy intrepid heart never yet felt the touch of fear; – But – "

"But what?"

"Ah, my best Pierre!"

"With kisses I will suck thy secret from thy cheek! – but what?"

"Let us hie homeward, Pierre. Some nameless sadness, faintness, strangely comes to me. Foretaste I feel of endless dreariness. Tell me once more the story of that face, Pierre, – that mysterious, haunting face, which thou once told'st me, thou didst thrice vainly try to shun. Blue is the sky, oh, bland the air, Pierre; – but – tell me the story of the face, – the dark-eyed, lustrous, imploring, mournful face, that so mystically paled, and shrunk at thine. Ah, Pierre, sometimes I have thought, – never will I wed with my best Pierre, until the riddle of that face be known. Tell me, tell me, Pierre; – as a fixed basilisk, with eyes of steady, flaming mournfulness, that face this instant fastens me."

"Bewitched! bewitched! – Cursed be the hour I acted on the thought, that Love hath no reserves. Never should I have told thee the story of that face, Lucy. I have bared myself too much to thee. Oh, never should Love know all!"

"Knows not all, then loves not all, Pierre. Never shalt thou so say again; – and Pierre, listen to me. Now, – now, in this inexplicable trepidation that I feel, I do conjure thee, that thou wilt ever continue to do as thou hast done; so that I may ever continue to know all that agitatest thee, the airiest and most transient thought, that ever shall sweep into thee from the wide atmosphere of all things that hem mortality. Did I doubt thee here; – could I ever think, that thy heart hath yet one private nook or

corner from me; – fatal disenchanting day for me, my Pierre, would that be. I tell thee, Pierre – and 'tis Love's own self that now speaks through me – only in unbounded confidence and interchangings of all subtlest secrets, can Love possibly endure. Love's self is a secret, and so feeds on secrets, Pierre. Did I only know of thee, what the whole common world may know – what then were Pierre to me? – Thou must be wholly a disclosed secret to me; Love is vain and proud; and when I walk the streets, and meet thy friends, I must still be laughing and hugging to myself the thought, – They know him not; – I only know my Pierre; – none else beneath the circuit of yon sun. Then, swear to me, dear Pierre, that thou wilt never keep a secret from me – no, never, never; – swear!"

"Something seizes me. Thy inexplicable tears, falling, falling on my heart, have now turned it to a stone. I feel icy cold and hard; I will not swear!"

"Pierre! Pierre!"

"God help thee, and God help me, Lucy. I can not think, that in this most mild and dulcet air, the invisible agencies are plotting treasons against our loves. Oh! if ye be now nigh us, ye things I have no name for; then by a name that should be efficacious – by Christ's holy name, I warn ye back from her and me. Touch her not, ye airy devils; hence to your appointed hell! why come ye prowling in these heavenly perlieus? Can not the chains of Love omnipotent bind ye, fiends?"

"Is this Pierre? His eyes glare fearfully; now I see layer on layer deeper in him; he turns round and menaces the air and talks to it, as if defied by the air. Woe is me, that fairy love should raise this evil spell! – Pierre?"

"But now I was infinite distances from thee, oh my Lucy, wandering baffled in the choking night; but thy voice might find me, though I had wandered to the Boreal realm, Lucy. Here I sit down by thee; I catch a soothing from thee."

"My own, own Pierre! Pierre, into ten trillion pieces I could now be torn for thee; in my bosom would yet hide thee, and there keep thee warm, though I sat down on Arctic ice-floes, frozen to a corpse. My own, best, blessed Pierre! Now, could I plant some poniard in me, that my silly ailings should have power to move thee thus, and pain thee thus. Forgive me, Pierre; thy changed face hath chased the other from me; the fright of thee exceeds all other frights. It does not so haunt me now. Press hard my hand; look hard on me, my love, that its last trace may pass away. Now I feel almost whole again; now, 'tis gone. Up, my Pierre; let us up, and fly these hills, whence, I fear, too wide a prospect meets us. Fly we to the plain. See, thy steeds neigh for thee – they call thee – see, the clouds fly down toward the plain – lo, these hills now seem all desolate to me, and the vale all verdure. Thank thee, Pierre. – See, now, I quit the hills, dry-cheeked; and leave all tears behind to be sucked in by these evergreens, meet emblems of the unchanging love, my own sadness nourishes in me. Hard fate, that Love's best verdure should feed so on tears!"

Now they rolled swiftly down the slopes; nor tempted the upper hills; but sped fast for the plain. Now the cloud hath passed from Lucy's eye; no more the lurid slanting light forks upward from her lover's brow. In the plain they find peace, and love, and joy again.

"It was the merest, idling, wanton vapor, Lucy!"

"An empty echo, Pierre, of a sad sound, long past. Bless thee, my Pierre!"

"The great God wrap thee ever, Lucy. So, now, we are home."

VI

AFTER seeing Lucy into her aunt's most cheerful parlor, and seating her by the honeysuckle that half clambered into the window there; and near to which was her easel for crayon-sketching, upon part of whose frame Lucy had cunningly trained two slender vines, into whose earth-filled pots two of the three legs of the easel were inserted; and sitting down himself by her, and by his pleasant, lightsome chat, striving to chase the last trace of sadness from her; and not till his object seemed fully gained; Pierre rose to call her good aunt to her, and so take his leave till evening, when Lucy called

him back, begging him first to bring her the blue portfolio from her chamber, for she wished to kill her last lingering melancholy – if any indeed did linger now – by diverting her thoughts, in a little pencil sketch, to scenes widely different from those of Saddle Meadows and its hills.

So Pierre went up stairs, but paused on the threshold of the open door. He never had entered that chamber but with feelings of a wonderful reverentialness. The carpet seemed as holy ground. Every chair seemed sanctified by some departed saint, there once seated long ago. Here his book of Love was all a rubric, and said – Bow now, Pierre, bow. But this extreme loyalty to the piety of love, called from him by such glimpses of its most secret inner shrine, was not unrelieved betimes by such quickenings of all his pulses, that in fantasy he pressed the wide beauty of the world in his embracing arms; for all his world resolved itself into his heart's best love for Lucy.

Now, crossing the magic silence of the empty chamber, he caught the snow-white bed reflected in the toilet-glass. This rooted him. For one swift instant, he seemed to see in that one glance the two separate beds – the real one and the reflected one – and an unbidden, most miserable presentiment thereupon stole into him. But in one breath it came and went. So he advanced, and with a fond and gentle joyfulness, his eye now fell upon the spotless bed itself, and fastened on a snow-white roll that lay beside the pillow. Now he started; Lucy seemed coming in upon him; but no – 'tis only the foot of one of her little slippers, just peeping into view from under the narrow nether curtains of the bed. Then again his glance fixed itself upon the slender, snow-white, ruffled roll; and he stood as one enchanted. Never precious parchment of the Greek was half so precious in his eyes. Never trembling scholar longed more to unroll the mystic vellum, than Pierre longed to unroll the sacred secrets of that snow-white, ruffled thing. But his hands touched not any object in that chamber, except the one he had gone thither for.

"Here is the blue portfolio, Lucy. See, the key hangs to its silver lock; – were you not fearful I would open it? – 'twas tempting, I must confess."

"Open it!" said Lucy – "why, yes, Pierre, yes; what secret thing keep I from thee? Read me through and through. I am entirely thine. See!" and tossing open the portfolio, all manner of rosy things came floating from it, and a most delicate perfume of some invisible essence.

"Ah! thou holy angel, Lucy!"

"Why, Pierre, thou art transfigured; thou now lookest as one who – why, Pierre?"

"As one who had just peeped in at paradise, Lucy; and – "

"Again wandering in thy mind, Pierre; no more – Come, you must leave me, now. I am quite rested again. Quick, call my aunt, and leave me. Stay, this evening we are to look over the book of plates from the city, you know. Be early; – go now, Pierre."

"Well, good-bye, till evening, thou height of all delight."

VII

AS Pierre drove through the silent village, beneath the vertical shadows of the noon-day trees, the sweet chamber scene abandoned him, and the mystical face recurred to him, and kept with him. At last, arrived at home, he found his mother absent; so passing straight through the wide middle hall of the mansion, he descended the piazza on the other ride, and wandered away in reveries down to the river bank.

Here one primeval pine-tree had been luckily left standing by the otherwise unsparing woodmen, who long ago had cleared that meadow. It was once crossing to this noble pine, from a clump of hemlocks far across the river, that Pierre had first noticed the significant fact, that while the hemlock and the pine are trees of equal growth and stature, and are so similar in their general aspect, that people unused to woods sometimes confound them; and while both trees are proverbially trees of sadness, yet the dark hemlock hath no music in its thoughtful boughs; but the gentle pine-tree drops melodious mournfulness.

At its half-bared roots of sadness, Pierre sat down, and marked the mighty bulk and far out-reaching length of one particular root, which, straying down the bank, the storms and rains had years ago exposed.

"How wide, how strong these roots must spread! Sure, this pine-tree takes powerful hold of this fair earth! Yon bright flower hath not so deep a root. This tree hath outlived a century of that gay flower's generations, and will outlive a century of them yet to come. This is most sad. Hark, now I hear the pyramidical and numberless, flame-like complainings of this Eolean pine; – the wind breathes now upon it: – the wind, – that is God's breath! Is He so sad? Oh, tree! so mighty thou, so lofty, yet so mournful! This is most strange! Hark! as I look up into thy high secrecies, oh, tree, the face, the face, peeps down on me! – 'Art thou Pierre? Come to me' – oh, thou mysterious girl, – what an ill-matched pendant thou, to that other countenance of sweet Lucy, which also hangs, and first did hang within my heart! Is grief a pendant then to pleasantness? Is grief a self-willed guest that *will* come in? Yet I have never known thee, Grief; – thou art a legend to me. I have known some fiery broils of glorious frenzy; I have oft tasted of revery; whence comes pensiveness; whence comes sadness; whence all delicious poetic presentiments; – but thou, Grief! art still a ghost-story to me. I know thee not, – do half disbelieve in thee. Not that I would be without my too little cherished fits of sadness now and then; but God keep me from thee, thou other shape of far profounder gloom! I shudder at thee! The face! – the face! – forth again from thy high secrecies, oh, tree! the face steals down upon me. Mysterious girl! who art thou? by what right snatchest thou thus my deepest thoughts? Take thy thin fingers from me; – I am affianced, and not to thee. Leave me! – what share hast thou in me? Surely, thou lovest not me? – that were most miserable for thee, and me, and Lucy. It can not be. What, *who* art thou? Oh! wretched vagueness – too familiar to me, yet inexplicable, – unknown, utterly unknown! I seem to founder in this perplexity. Thou seemest to know somewhat of me, that I know not of myself, – what is it then? If thou hast a secret in thy eyes of mournful mystery, out with it; Pierre demands it; what is that thou hast veiled in thee so imperfectly, that I seem to see its motion, but not its form? It visibly rustles behind the concealing screen. Now, never into the soul of Pierre, stole there before, a muffledness like this! If aught really lurks in it, ye sovereign powers that claim all my leal worshipings, I conjure ye to lift the veil; I must see it face to face. Tread I on a mine, warn me; advance I on a precipice, hold me back; but abandon me to an unknown misery, that it shall suddenly seize me, and possess me, wholly, – that ye will never do; else, Pierre's fond faith in ye – now clean, untouched – may clean depart; and give me up to be a railing atheist! Ah, now the face departs. Pray heaven it hath not only stolen back, and hidden again in thy high secrecies, oh tree! But 'tis gone – gone – entirely gone; and I thank God, and I feel joy again; joy, which I also feel to be my right as man; deprived of joy, I feel I should find cause for deadly feuds with things invisible. Ha! a coat of iron-mail seems to grow round, and husk me now; and I have heard, that the bitterest winters are foretold by a thicker husk upon the Indian corn; so our old farmers say. But 'tis a dark similitude. Quit thy analogies; sweet in the orator's mouth, bitter in the thinker's belly. Now, then, I'll up with my own joyful will; and with my joy's face scare away all phantoms: – so, they go; and Pierre is Joy's, and Life's again. Thou pine-tree! – henceforth I will resist thy too treacherous persuasiveness. Thou'lt not so often woo me to thy airy tent, to ponder on the gloomy rooted stakes that bind it. Hence now I go; and peace be with thee, pine! That blessed sereneness which lurks ever at the heart of sadness – mere sadness – and remains when all the rest has gone; – that sweet feeling is now mine, and cheaply mine. I am not sorry I was sad, I feel so blessed now. Dearest Lucy! – well, well; – 'twill be a pretty time we'll have this evening; there's the book of Flemish prints – that first we must look over; then, second, is Flaxman's Homer – clear-cut outlines, yet full of unadorned barbaric nobleness. Then Flaxman's Dante; – Dante! Night's and Hell's poet he. No, we will not open Dante. Methinks now the face – the face – minds me a little of pensive, sweet Francesca's face – or, rather, as it had been Francesca's daughter's face – wafted on the sad dark wind, toward observant Virgil and the blistered Florentine. No, we will not open Flaxman's Dante. Francesca's mournful face is now

ideal to me. Flaxman might evoke it wholly, – make it present in lines of misery – bewitching power. No! I will not open Flaxman's Dante! Damned be the hour I read in Dante! more damned than that wherein Paolo and Francesca read in fatal Launcelot!"

BOOK III.
THE PRESENTIMENT AND THE VERIFICATION

I

THE face, of which Pierre and Lucy so strangely and fearfully hinted, was not of enchanted air; but its mortal lineaments of mournfulness had been visibly beheld by Pierre. Nor had it accosted him in any privacy; or in any lonely byeway; or beneath the white light of the crescent moon; but in a joyous chamber, bright with candles, and ringing with two score women's gayest voices. Out of the heart of mirthfulness, this shadow had come forth to him. Encircled by bandelets of light, it had still beamed upon him; vaguely historic and prophetic; backward, hinting of some irrevocable sin; forward, pointing to some inevitable ill. One of those faces, which now and then appear to man, and without one word of speech, still reveal glimpses of some fearful gospel. In natural guise, but lit by supernatural light; palpable to the senses, but inscrutable to the soul; in their perfectest impression on us, ever hovering between Tartarean misery and Paradisaic beauty; such faces, compounded so of hell and heaven, overthrow in us all foregone persuasions, and make us wondering children in this world again.

The face had accosted Pierre some weeks previous to his ride with Lucy to the hills beyond Saddle Meadows; and before her arrival for the summer at the village; moreover it had accosted him in a very common and homely scene; but this enhanced the wonder.

On some distant business, with a farmer-tenant, he had been absent from the mansion during the best part of the day, and had but just come home, early of a pleasant moonlight evening, when Dates delivered a message to him from his mother, begging him to come for her about half-past seven that night to Miss Llanyllyn's cottage, in order to accompany her thence to that of the two Miss Pennies. At the mention of that last name, Pierre well knew what he must anticipate. Those elderly and truly pious spinsters, gifted with the most benevolent hearts in the world, and at mid-age deprived by envious nature of their hearing, seemed to have made it a maxim of their charitable lives, that since God had not given them any more the power to hear Christ's gospel preached, they would therefore thenceforth do what they could toward practicing it. Wherefore, as a matter of no possible interest to them now, they abstained from church; and while with prayer-books in their hands the Rev. Mr. Falsgrave's congregation were engaged in worshiping their God, according to the divine behest; the two Miss Pennies, with thread and needle, were hard at work in serving him; making up shirts and gowns for the poor people of the parish. Pierre had heard that they had recently been at the trouble of organizing a regular society, among the neighboring farmers' wives and daughters, to meet twice a month at their own house (the Miss Pennies) for the purpose of sewing in concert for the benefit of various settlements of necessitous emigrants, who had lately pitched their populous shanties further up the river. But though this enterprise had not been started without previously acquainting Mrs. Glendinning of it, – for indeed she was much loved and honored by the pious spinsters, – and their promise of solid assistance from that gracious manorial lady; yet Pierre had not heard that his mother had been officially invited to preside, or be at all present at the semi-monthly meetings; though he supposed, that far from having any scruples against so doing, she would be very glad to associate that way, with the good people of the village.

"Now, brother Pierre" – said Mrs. Glendinning, rising from Miss Llanyllyn's huge cushioned chair – "throw my shawl around me; and good-evening to Lucy's aunt. – There, we shall be late."

As they walked along, she added – "Now, Pierre, I know you are apt to be a little impatient sometimes, of these sewing scenes; but courage; I merely want to peep in on them; so as to get some

inkling of what they would indeed be at; and then my promised benefactions can be better selected by me. Besides, Pierre, I could have had Dates escort me, but I preferred you; because I want you to know who they are you live among; how many really pretty, and naturally-refined dames and girls you shall one day be lord of the manor of. I anticipate a rare display of rural red and white."

Cheered by such pleasant promises, Pierre soon found himself leading his mother into a room full of faces. The instant they appeared, a gratuitous old body, seated with her knitting near the door, squeaked out shrilly – "Ah! dames, dames, – Madam Glendinning! – Master Pierre Glendinning!"

Almost immediately following this sound, there came a sudden, long-drawn, unearthly, girlish shriek, from the further corner of the long, double room. Never had human voice so affected Pierre before. Though he saw not the person from whom it came, and though the voice was wholly strange to him, yet the sudden shriek seemed to split its way clean through his heart, and leave a yawning gap there. For an instant, he stood bewildered; but started at his mother's voice; her arm being still in his. "Why do you clutch my arm so, Pierre? You pain me. Pshaw! some one has fainted, – nothing more."

Instantly Pierre recovered himself, and affecting to mock at his own trepidation, hurried across the room to offer his services, if such were needed. But dames and maidens had been all beforehand with him; the lights were wildly flickering in the air-current made by the flinging open of the casement, near to where the shriek had come. But the climax of the tumult was soon past; and presently, upon closing the casement, it subsided almost wholly. The elder of the spinster Pennies, advancing to Mrs. Glendinning, now gave her to understand, that one of the further crowd of industrious girls present, had been attacked by a sudden, but fleeting fit, vaguely imputable to some constitutional disorder or other. She was now quite well again. And so the company, one and all, seemingly acting upon their natural good-breeding, which in any one at bottom, is but delicacy and charity, refrained from all further curiosity; reminded not the girl of what had passed; noted her scarce at all; and all needles stitched away as before.

Leaving his mother to speak with whom she pleased, and attend alone to her own affairs with the society; Pierre, oblivious now in such a lively crowd, of any past unpleasantness, after some courtly words to the Miss Pennies, – insinuated into their understandings through a long coiled trumpet, which, when not in use, the spinsters wore, hanging like a powder-horn from their girdles: – and likewise, after manifesting the profoundest and most intelligent interest in the mystic mechanism of a huge woolen sock, in course of completion by a spectacled old lady of his more particular acquaintance; after all this had been gone through, and something more too tedious to detail, but which occupied him for nearly half an hour, Pierre, with a slightly blushing, and imperfectly balanced assurance, advanced toward the further crowd of maidens; where, by the light of many a well-snuffed candle, they clubbed all their bright contrasting cheeks, like a dense bed of garden tulips. There were the shy and pretty Maries, Marthas, Susans, Betties, Jennies, Nellies; and forty more fair nymphs, who skimmed the cream, and made the butter of the fat farms of Saddle Meadows.

Assurance is in presence of the assured. Where embarrassments prevail, they affect the most disembarrassed. What wonder, then, that gazing on such a thick array of wreathing, roguish, half-averted, blushing faces – still audacious in their very embarrassment – Pierre, too, should flush a bit, and stammer in his attitudes a little? Youthful love and graciousness were in his heart; kindest words upon his tongue; but there he stood, target for the transfixing glances of those ambushed archers of the eye.

But his abashments last too long; his cheek hath changed from blush to pallor; what strange thing does Pierre Glendinning see? Behind the first close, busy breast-work of young girls, are several very little stands, or circular tables, where sit small groups of twos and threes, sewing in small comparative solitudes, as it were. They would seem to be the less notable of the rural company; or else, for some cause, they have voluntarily retired into their humble banishment. Upon one of these persons engaged at the furthermost and least conspicuous of these little stands, and close by a casement, Pierre's glance is palely fixed.

The girl sits steadily sewing; neither she nor her two companions speak. Her eyes are mostly upon her work; but now and then a very close observer would notice that she furtively lifts them, and moves them sideways and timidly toward Pierre; and then, still more furtively and timidly toward his lady mother, further off. All the while, her preternatural calmness sometimes seems only made to cover the intensest struggle in her bosom. Her unadorned and modest dress is black; fitting close up to her neck, and clasping it with a plain, velvet border. To a nice perception, that velvet shows elastically; contracting and expanding, as though some choked, violent thing were risen up there within from the teeming region of her heart. But her dark, olive cheek is without a blush, or sign of any disquietude. So far as this girl lies upon the common surface, ineffable composure steeps her. But still, she sideways steals the furtive, timid glance. Anon, as yielding to the irresistible climax of her concealed emotion, whatever that may be, she lifts her whole marvelous countenance into the radiant candlelight, and for one swift instant, that face of supernaturalness unreservedly meets Pierre's. Now, wonderful loveliness, and a still more wonderful loneliness, have with inexplicable implorings, looked up to him from that henceforth immemorial face. There, too, he seemed to see the fair ground where Anguish had contended with Beauty, and neither being conqueror, both had laid down on the field.

Recovering at length from his all too obvious emotion, Pierre turned away still farther, to regain the conscious possession of himself. A wild, bewildering, and incomprehensible curiosity had seized him, to know something definite of that face. To this curiosity, at the moment, he entirely surrendered himself; unable as he was to combat it, or reason with it in the slightest way. So soon as he felt his outward composure returned to him, he purposed to chat his way behind the breastwork of bright eyes and cheeks, and on some parlor pretense or other, hear, if possible, an audible syllable from one whose mere silent aspect had so potentially moved him. But at length, as with this object in mind, he was crossing the room again, he heard his mother's voice, gayly calling him away; and turning, saw her shawled and bonneted. He could now make no plausible stay, and smothering the agitation in him, he bowed a general and hurried adieu to the company, and went forth with his mother.

They had gone some way homeward, in perfect silence, when his mother spoke.

"Well, Pierre, what can it possibly be!"

"My God, mother, did you see her then!"

"My son!" cried Mrs. Glendinning, instantly stopping in terror, and withdrawing her arm from Pierre, "what – what under heaven ails you? This is most strange! I but playfully asked, what you were so steadfastly thinking of; and here you answer me by the strangest question, in a voice that seems to come from under your great-grandfather's tomb! What, in heaven's name, does this mean, Pierre? Why were you so silent, and why now are you so ill-timed in speaking! Answer me; – explain all this; —*she*—*she*– what *she* should you be thinking of but Lucy Tartan? – Pierre, beware, beware! I had thought you firmer in your lady's faith, than such strange behavior as this would seem to hint. Answer me, Pierre, what may this mean? Come, I hate a mystery; speak, my son."

Fortunately, this prolonged verbalized wonder in his mother afforded Pierre time to rally from his double and aggravated astonishment, brought about by first suspecting that his mother also had been struck by the strange aspect of the face, and then, having that suspicion so violently beaten back upon him, by her apparently unaffected alarm at finding him in some region of thought wholly unshared by herself at the time.

"It is nothing – nothing, sister Mary; just nothing at all in the world. I believe I was dreaming – sleep-walking, or something of that sort. They were vastly pretty girls there this evening, sister Mary, were they not? Come, let us walk on – do, sister mine."

"Pierre, Pierre! – but I will take your arm again; – and have you really nothing more to say? were you really wandering, Pierre?"

"I swear to you, my dearest mother, that never before in my whole existence, have I so completely gone wandering in my soul, as at that very moment. But it is all over now." Then in a less earnest and somewhat playful tone, he added: "And sister mine, if you know aught of the physical and

sanitary authors, you must be aware, that the only treatment for such a case of harmless temporary aberration, is for all persons to ignore it in the subject. So no more of this foolishness. Talking about it only makes me feel very unpleasantly silly, and there is no knowing that it may not bring it back upon me."

"Then by all means, my dear boy, not another word about it. But it's passing strange – very, very strange indeed. Well, about that morning business; how fared you? Tell me about it."

II

SO Pierre, gladly plunging into this welcome current of talk, was enabled to attend his mother home without furnishing further cause for her concern or wonderment. But not by any means so readily could he allay his own concern and wonderment. Too really true in itself, however evasive in its effect at the time, was that earnest answer to his mother, declaring that never in his whole existence had he been so profoundly stirred. The face haunted him as some imploring, and beauteous, impassioned, ideal Madonna's haunts the morbidly longing and enthusiastic, but ever-baffled artist. And ever, as the mystic face thus rose before his fancy's sight, another sense was touched in him; the long-drawn, unearthly, girlish shriek pealed through and through his soul; for now he knew the shriek came from the face – such Delphic shriek could only come from such a source. And wherefore that shriek? thought Pierre. Bodes it ill to the face, or me, or both? How am I changed, that my appearance on any scene should have power to work such woe? But it was mostly the face – the face, that wrought upon him. The shriek seemed as incidentally embodied there.

The emotions he experienced seemed to have taken hold of the deepest roots and subtlest fibres of his being. And so much the more that it was so subterranean in him, so much the more did he feel its weird inscrutableness. What was one unknown, sad-eyed, shrieking girl to him? There must be sad-eyed girls somewhere in the world, and this was only one of them. And what was the most beautiful sad-eyed girl to him? Sadness might be beautiful, as well as mirth – he lost himself trying to follow out this tangle. "I will no more of this infatuation," he would cry; but forth from regions of irradiated air, the divine beauty and imploring sufferings of the face, stole into his view.

Hitherto I have ever held but lightly, thought Pierre, all stories of ghostly mysticalness in man; my creed of this world leads me to believe in visible, beautiful flesh, and audible breath, however sweet and scented; but only in visible flesh, and audible breath, have I hitherto believed. But now! – now! – and again he would lose himself in the most surprising and preternatural ponderings, which baffled all the introspective cunning of his mind. Himself was too much for himself. He felt that what he had always before considered the solid land of veritable reality, was now being audaciously encroached upon by bannered armies of hooded phantoms, disembarking in his soul, as from flotillas of specter-boats.

The terrors of the face were not those of Gorgon; not by repelling hideousness did it smite him so; but bewilderingly allured him, by its nameless beauty, and its long-suffering, hopeless anguish.

But he was sensible that this general effect upon him, was also special; the face somehow mystically appealing to his own private and individual affections; and by a silent and tyrannic call, challenging him in his deepest moral being, and summoning Truth, Love, Pity, Conscience, to the stand. Apex of all wonders! thought Pierre; this indeed almost unmans me with its wonderfulness. Escape the face he could not. Muffling his own in his bed-clothes – that did not hide it. Flying from it by sunlight down the meadows, was as vain.

Most miraculous of all to Pierre was the vague impression, that somewhere he had seen traits of the likeness of that face before. But where, he could not say; nor could he, in the remotest degree, imagine. He was not unaware – for in one or two instances, he had experienced the fact – that sometimes a man may see a passing countenance in the street, which shall irresistibly and magnetically affect him, for a moment, as wholly unknown to him, and yet strangely reminiscent of some vague

face he has previously encountered, in some fancied time, too, of extreme interest to his life. But not so was it now with Pierre. The face had not perplexed him for a few speculative minutes, and then glided from him, to return no more. It stayed close by him; only – and not invariably – could he repel it, by the exertion of all his resolution and self-will. Besides, what of general enchantment lurked in his strange sensations, seemed concentringly condensed, and pointed to a spear-head, that pierced his heart with an inexplicable pang, whenever the specializing emotion – to call it so – seized the possession of his thoughts, and waved into his visions, a thousand forms of by-gone times, and many an old legendary family scene, which he had heard related by his elderly relations, some of them now dead.

Disguising his wild reveries as best he might from the notice of his mother, and all other persons of her household, for two days Pierre wrestled with his own haunted spirit; and at last, so effectually purged it of all weirdnesses, and so effectually regained the general mastery of himself, that for a time, life went with him, as though he had never been stirred so strangely. Once more, the sweet unconditional thought of Lucy slid wholly into his soul, dislodging thence all such phantom occupants. Once more he rode, he walked, he swam, he vaulted; and with new zest threw himself into the glowing practice of all those manly exercises, he so dearly loved. It almost seemed in him, that ere promising forever to protect, as well as eternally to love, his Lucy, he must first completely invigorate and embrawn himself into the possession of such a noble muscular manliness, that he might champion Lucy against the whole physical world.

Still – even before the occasional reappearance of the face to him – Pierre, for all his willful ardor in his gymnasticals and other diversions, whether in-doors or out, or whether by book or foil; still, Pierre could not but be secretly annoyed, and not a little perplexed, as to the motive, which, for the first time in his recollection, had impelled him, not merely to conceal from his mother a singular circumstance in his life (for that, he felt would have been but venial; and besides, as will eventually be seen, he could find one particular precedent for it, in his past experience) but likewise, and superaddedly, to parry, nay, to evade, and, in effect, to return something alarmingly like a fib, to an explicit question put to him by his mother; – such being the guise, in which part of the conversation they had had that eventful night, now appeared to his fastidious sense. He considered also, that his evasive answer had not pantheistically burst from him in a momentary interregnum of self-command. No; his mother had made quite a lengthy speech to him; during which he well remembered, he had been carefully, though with trepidation, turning over in his mind, how best he might recall her from her unwished-for and untimely scent. Why had this been so? Was this his wont? What inscrutable thing was it, that so suddenly had seized him, and made him a falsifyer – ay, a falsifyer and nothing less – to his own dearly-beloved, and confiding mother? Here, indeed, was something strange for him; here was stuff for his utmost ethical meditations. But, nevertheless, on strict introspection, he felt, that he would not willingly have it otherwise; not willingly would he now undissemble himself in this matter to his mother. Why was this, too? Was this his wont? Here, again, was food for mysticism. Here, in imperfect inklings, tinglings, presentiments, Pierre began to feel – what all mature men, who are Magians, sooner or later know, and more or less assuredly – that not always in our actions, are we our own factors. But this conceit was very dim in Pierre; and dimness is ever suspicious and repugnant to us; and so, Pierre shrank abhorringly from the infernal catacombs of thought, down into which, this fœtal fancy beckoned him. Only this, though in secret, did he cherish; only this, he felt persuaded of; namely, that not for both worlds would he have his mother made a partner to his sometime mystic mood.

But with this nameless fascination of the face upon him, during those two days that it had first and fully possessed him for its own, did perplexed Pierre refrain from that apparently most natural of all resources, – boldly seeking out, and returning to the palpable cause, and questioning her, by look or voice, or both together – the mysterious girl herself? No; not entirely did Pierre here refrain. But his profound curiosity and interest in the matter – strange as it may seem – did not so much

appear to be embodied in the mournful person of the olive girl, as by some radiations from her, embodied in the vague conceits which agitated his own soul. *There*, lurked the subtler secret: *that*, Pierre had striven to tear away. From without, no wonderful effect is wrought within ourselves, unless some interior, responding wonder meets it. That the starry vault shall surcharge the heart with all rapturous marvelings, is only because we ourselves are greater miracles, and superber trophies than all the stars in universal space. Wonder interlocks with wonder; and then the confounding feeling comes. No cause have we to fancy, that a horse, a dog, a fowl, ever stand transfixed beneath yon skyey load of majesty. But our soul's arches underfit into its; and so, prevent the upper arch from falling on us with unsustainable inscrutableness. "Explain ye my deeper mystery," said the shepherd Chaldean king, smiting his breast, lying on his back upon the plain; "and then, I will bestow all my wonderings upon ye, ye stately stars!" So, in some sort, with Pierre. Explain thou this strange integral feeling in me myself, he thought – turning upon the fancied face – and I will then renounce all other wonders, to gaze wonderingly at thee. But thou hast evoked in me profounder spells than the evoking one, thou face! For me, thou hast uncovered one infinite, dumb, beseeching countenance of mystery, underlying all the surfaces of visible time and space.

But during those two days of his first wild vassalage to his original sensations, Pierre had not been unvisited by less mysterious impulses. Two or three very plain and practical plannings of desirable procedures in reference to some possible homely explication of all this nonsense – so he would momentarily denominate it – now and then flittingly intermitted his pervading mood of semi-madness. Once he had seized his hat, careless of his accustomed gloves and cane, and found himself in the street, walking very rapidly in the direction of the Miss Pennies'. But whither now? he disenchantingly interrogated himself. Where would you go? A million to one, those deaf old spinsters can tell you nothing you burn to know. Deaf old spinsters are not used to be the depositaries of such mystical secrecies. But then, they may reveal her name – where she dwells, and something, however fragmentary and unsatisfactory, of who she is, and whence. Ay; but then, in ten minutes after your leaving them, all the houses in Saddle Meadows would be humming with the gossip of Pierre Glendinning engaged to marry Lucy Tartan, and yet running about the country, in ambiguous pursuit of strange young women. That will never do. You remember, do you not, often seeing the Miss Pennies, hatless and without a shawl, hurrying through the village, like two postmen intent on dropping some tit-bit of precious gossip? What a morsel for them, Pierre, have you, if you now call upon them. Verily, their trumpets are both for use and for significance. Though very deaf, the Miss Pennies are by no means dumb. They blazon very wide.

"Now be sure, and say that it was the Miss Pennies, who left the news – be sure – we – the Miss Pennies – remember – say to Mrs. Glendinning it was we." Such was the message that now half-humorously occurred to Pierre, as having been once confided to him by the sister spinsters, one evening when they called with a choice present of some very *recherche* chit-chat for his mother; but found the manorial lady out; and so charged her son with it; hurrying away to all the inferior houses, so as not to be anywhere forestalled in their disclosure.

Now, I wish it had been any other house than the Miss Pennies; any other house but theirs, and on my soul I believe I should have gone. But not to them – no, that I can not do. It would be sure to reach my mother, and then she would put this and that together – stir a little – let it simmer – and farewell forever to all her majestic notions of my immaculate integrity. Patience, Pierre, the population of this region is not so immense. No dense mobs of Nineveh confound all personal identities in Saddle Meadows. Patience; thou shalt see it soon again; catch it passing thee in some green lane, sacred to thy evening reveries. She that bears it can not dwell remote. Patience, Pierre. Ever are such mysteries best and soonest unraveled by the eventual unraveling of themselves. Or, if you will, go back and get your gloves, and more especially your cane, and begin your own secret voyage of discovery after it. Your cane, I say; because it will probably be a very long and weary walk. True, just now I hinted, that she that bears it can not dwell very remote; but then her nearness may

not be at all conspicuous. So, homeward, and put off thy hat, and let thy cane stay still, good Pierre. Seek not to mystify the mystery so.

Thus, intermittingly, ever and anon during those sad two days of deepest sufferance, Pierre would stand reasoning and expostulating with himself; and by such meditative treatment, reassure his own spontaneous impulses. Doubtless, it was wise and right that so he did; doubtless: but in a world so full of all dubieties as this, one can never be entirely certain whether another person, however carefully and cautiously conscientious, has acted in all respects conceivable for the very best.

But when the two days were gone by, and Pierre began to recognize his former self as restored to him from its mystic exile, then the thoughts of personally and pointedly seeking out the unknown, either preliminarily by a call upon the sister spinsters, or generally by performing the observant lynx-eyed circuit of the country on foot, and as a crafty inquisitor, dissembling his cause of inquisition; these and all similar intentions completely abandoned Pierre.

He was now diligently striving, with all his mental might, forever to drive the phantom from him. He seemed to feel that it begat in him a certain condition of his being, which was most painful, and every way uncongenial to his natural, wonted self. It had a touch of he knew not what sort of unhealthiness in it, so to speak; for, in his then ignorance, he could find no better term; it seemed to have in it a germ of somewhat which, if not quickly extirpated, might insidiously poison and embitter his whole life – that choice, delicious life which he had vowed to Lucy for his one pure and comprehensive offering – at once a sacrifice and a delight.

Nor in these endeavorings did he entirely fail. For the most part, he felt now that he had a power over the comings and the goings of the face; but not on all occasions. Sometimes the old, original mystic tyranny would steal upon him; the long, dark, locks of mournful hair would fall upon his soul, and trail their wonderful melancholy along with them; the two full, steady, over-brimming eyes of loveliness and anguish would converge their magic rays, till he felt them kindling he could not tell what mysterious fires in the heart at which they aimed.

When once this feeling had him fully, then was the perilous time for Pierre. For supernatural as the feeling was, and appealing to all things ultramontane to his soul; yet was it a delicious sadness to him. Some hazy fairy swam above him in the heavenly ether, and showered down upon him the sweetest pearls of pensiveness. Then he would be seized with a singular impulse to reveal the secret to some one other individual in the world. Only one, not more; he could not hold all this strange fullness in himself. It must be shared. In such an hour it was, that chancing to encounter Lucy (her, whom above all others, he did confidingly adore), she heard the story of the face; nor slept at all that night; nor for a long time freed her pillow completely from wild, Beethoven sounds of distant, waltzing melodies, as of ambiguous fairies dancing on the heath.

III

THIS history goes forward and goes backward, as occasion calls. Nimble center, circumference elastic you must have. Now we return to Pierre, wending homeward from his reveries beneath the pine-tree.

His burst of impatience against the sublime Italian, Dante, arising from that poet being the one who, in a former time, had first opened to his shuddering eyes the infinite cliffs and gulfs of human mystery and misery; – though still more in the way of experimental vision, than of sensational presentiment or experience (for as yet he had not seen so far and deep as Dante, and therefore was entirely incompetent to meet the grim bard fairly on his peculiar ground), this ignorant burst of his young impatience, – also arising from that half contemptuous dislike, and sometimes selfish loathing, with which, either naturally feeble or undeveloped minds, regard those dark ravings of the loftier poets, which are in eternal opposition to their own fine-spun, shallow dreams of rapturous or prudential Youth; – this rash, untutored burst of Pierre's young impatience, seemed to have carried

off with it, all the other forms of his melancholy – if melancholy it had been – and left him now serene again, and ready for any tranquil pleasantness the gods might have in store. For his, indeed, was true Youth's temperament, – summary with sadness, swift to joyfulness, and long protracting, and detaining with that joyfulness, when once it came fully nigh to him.

As he entered the dining-hall, he saw Dates retiring from another door with his tray. Alone and meditative, by the bared half of the polished table, sat his mother at her dessert; fruit-baskets, and a decanter were before her. On the other leaf of the same table, still lay the cloth, folded back upon itself, and set out with one plate and its usual accompaniments.

"Sit down, Pierre; when I came home, I was surprised to hear that the phaeton had returned so early, and here I waited dinner for you, until I could wait no more. But go to the green pantry now, and get what Dates has but just put away for you there. Heigh-ho! too plainly I foresee it – no more regular dinner-hours, or tea-hours, or supper-hours, in Saddle Meadows, till its young lord is wedded. And that puts me in mind of something, Pierre; but I'll defer it till you have eaten a little. Do you know, Pierre, that if you continue these irregular meals of yours, and deprive me so entirely almost of your company, that I shall run fearful risk of getting to be a terrible wine-bibber; – yes, could you unalarmed see me sitting all alone here with this decanter, like any old nurse, Pierre; some solitary, forlorn old nurse, Pierre, deserted by her last friend, and therefore forced to embrace her flask?"

"No, I did not feel any great alarm, sister," said Pierre, smiling, "since I could not but perceive that the decanter was still full to the stopple."

"Possibly it may be only a fresh decanter, Pierre;" then changing her voice suddenly – "but mark me, Mr. Pierre Glendinning!"

"Well, Mrs. Mary Glendinning!"

"Do you know, sir, that you are very shortly to be married, – that indeed the day is all but fixed?"

"How-!" cried Pierre, in real joyful astonishment, both at the nature of the tidings, and the earnest tones in which they were conveyed – "dear, dear mother, you have strangely changed your mind then, my dear mother."

"It is even so, dear brother; – before this day month I hope to have a little sister Tartan."

"You talk very strangely, mother," rejoined Pierre, quickly. "I suppose, then, I have next to nothing to say in the matter!"

"Next to nothing, Pierre! What indeed could you say to the purpose? what at all have you to do with it, I should like to know? Do you so much as dream, you silly boy, that men ever have the marrying of themselves? Juxtaposition marries men. There is but one match-maker in the world, Pierre, and that is Mrs. Juxtaposition, a most notorious lady!"

"Very peculiar, disenchanting sort of talk, this, under the circumstances, sister Mary," laying down his fork. "Mrs. Juxtaposition, ah! And in your opinion, mother, does this fine glorious passion only amount to that?"

"Only to that, Pierre; but mark you: according to my creed – though this part of it is a little hazy – Mrs. Juxtaposition moves her pawns only as she herself is moved to so doing by the spirit."

"Ah! that sets it all right again," said Pierre, resuming his fork – "my appetite returns. But what was that about my being married so soon?" he added, vainly striving to assume an air of incredulity and unconcern; "you were joking, I suppose; it seems to me, sister, either you or I was but just now wandering in the mind a little, on that subject. Are you really thinking of any such thing? and have you really vanquished your sagacious scruples by yourself, after I had so long and ineffectually sought to do it for you? Well, I am a million times delighted; tell me quick!"

"I will, Pierre. You very well know, that from the first hour you apprised me – or rather, from a period prior to that – from the moment that I, by my own insight, became aware of your love for Lucy, I have always approved it. Lucy is a delicious girl; of honorable descent, a fortune, well-bred, and the very pattern of all that I think amiable and attractive in a girl of seventeen."

"Well, well, well," cried Pierre rapidly and impetuously; "we both knew that before."

"Well, well, well, Pierre," retorted his mother, mockingly.

"It is not well, well, well; but ill, ill, ill, to torture me so, mother; go on, do!"

"But notwithstanding my admiring approval of your choice, Pierre; yet, as you know, I have resisted your entreaties for my consent to your speedy marriage, because I thought that a girl of scarcely seventeen, and a boy scarcely twenty, should not be in such a hurry; – there was plenty of time, I thought, which could be profitably employed by both."

"Permit me here to interrupt you, mother. Whatever you may have seen in me; she, – I mean Lucy, – has never been in the slightest hurry to be married; – that's all. But I shall regard it as a *lapsus-lingua* in you."

"Undoubtedly, a *lapsus*. But listen to me. I have been carefully observing both you and Lucy of late; and that has made me think further of the matter. Now, Pierre, if you were in any profession, or in any business at all; nay, if I were a farmer's wife, and you my child, working in my fields; why, then, you and Lucy should still wait awhile. But as you have nothing to do but to think of Lucy by day, and dream of her by night, and as she is in the same predicament, I suppose; with respect to you; and as the consequence of all this begins to be discernible in a certain, just perceptible, and quite harmless thinness, so to speak, of the cheek; but a very conspicuous and dangerous febrileness of the eye; therefore, I choose the lesser of two evils; and now you have my permission to be married, as soon as the thing can be done with propriety. I dare say you have no objection to have the wedding take place before Christmas, the present month being the first of summer."

Pierre said nothing; but leaping to his feet, threw his two arms around his mother, and kissed her repeatedly.

"A most sweet and eloquent answer, Pierre; but sit down again. I desire now to say a little concerning less attractive, but quite necessary things connected with this affair. You know, that by your father's will, these lands and – "

"Miss Lucy, my mistress;" said Dates, throwing open the door.

Pierre sprang to his feet; but as if suddenly mindful of his mother's presence, composed himself again, though he still approached the door.

Lucy entered, carrying a little basket of strawberries.

"Why, how do you do, my dear," said Mrs. Glendinning affectionately. "This is an unexpected pleasure."

"Yes; and I suppose that Pierre here is a little surprised too; seeing that he was to call upon me this evening, and not I upon him before sundown. But I took a sudden fancy for a solitary stroll, – the afternoon was such a delicious one; and chancing – it was only chancing – to pass through the Locust Lane leading hither, I met the strangest little fellow, with this basket in his hand. – 'Yes, buy them, miss' – said he. 'And how do you know I want to buy them,' returned I, 'I don't want to buy them.' – 'Yes you do, miss; they ought to be twenty-six cents, but I'll take thirteen cents, that being my shilling. I always want the odd half cent, I do. Come, I can't wait, I have been expecting you long enough.'"

"A very sagacious little imp," laughed Mrs. Glendinning.

"Impertinent little rascal," cried Pierre.

"And am I not now the silliest of all silly girls, to be telling you my adventures so very frankly," smiled Lucy.

"No; but the most celestial of all innocents," cried Pierre, in a rhapsody of delight. "Frankly open is the flower, that hath nothing but purity to show."

"Now, my dear little Lucy," said Mrs. Glendinning, "let Pierre take off your shawl, and come now and stay to tea with us. Pierre has put back the dinner so, the tea-hour will come now very soon."

"Thank you; but I can not stay this time. Look, I have forgotten my own errand; I brought these strawberries for you, Mrs. Glendinning, and for Pierre; – Pierre is so wonderfully fond of them."

"I was audacious enough to think as much," cried Pierre, "for you *and* me, you see, mother; for you *and* me, you understand that, I hope."

"Perfectly, my dear brother."

Lucy blushed.

"How warm it is, Mrs. Glendinning."

"Very warm, Lucy. So you won't stay to tea?"

"No, I must go now; just a little stroll, that's all; good-bye! Now don't be following me, Pierre. Mrs. Glendinning, will you keep Pierre back? I know you want him; you were talking over some private affair when I entered; you both looked so very confidential."

"And you were not very far from right, Lucy," said Mrs. Glendinning, making no sign to stay her departure.

"Yes, business of the highest importance," said Pierre, fixing his eyes upon Lucy significantly.

At this moment, Lucy just upon the point of her departure, was hovering near the door; the setting sun, streaming through the window, bathed her whole form in golden loveliness and light; that wonderful, and most vivid transparency of her clear Welsh complexion, now fairly glowed like rosy snow. Her flowing, white, blue-ribboned dress, fleecily invested her. Pierre almost thought that she could only depart the house by floating out of the open window, instead of actually stepping from the door. All her aspect to him, was that moment touched with an indescribable gayety, buoyancy, fragility, and an unearthly evanescence.

Youth is no philosopher. Not into young Pierre's heart did there then come the thought, that as the glory of the rose endures but for a day, so the full bloom of girlish airiness and bewitchingness, passes from the earth almost as soon; as jealously absorbed by those frugal elements, which again incorporate that translated girlish bloom, into the first expanding flower-bud. Not into young Pierre, did there then steal that thought of utmost sadness; pondering on the inevitable evanescence of all earthly loveliness; which makes the sweetest things of life only food for ever-devouring and omnivorous melancholy. Pierre's thought was different from this, and yet somehow akin to it.

This to be my wife? I that but the other day weighed an hundred and fifty pounds of solid avoirdupois; —*I* to wed this heavenly fleece? Methinks one husbandly embrace would break her airy zone, and she exhale upward to that heaven whence she hath hither come, condensed to mortal sight. It can not be; I am of heavy earth, and she of airy light. By heaven, but marriage is an impious thing!

Meanwhile, as these things ran through his soul, Mrs. Glendinning also had thinkings of her own.

"A very beautiful tableau," she cried, at last, artistically turning her gay head a little sideways – "very beautiful, indeed; this, I suppose is all premeditated for my entertainment. Orpheus finding his Eurydice; or Pluto stealing Proserpine. Admirable! It might almost stand for either."

"No," said Pierre, gravely; "it is the last. Now, first I see a meaning there." Yes, he added to himself inwardly, I am Pluto stealing Proserpine; and every accepted lover is.

"And you would be very stupid, brother Pierre, if you did not see something there," said his mother, still that way pursuing her own different train of thought. "The meaning thereof is this: Lucy has commanded me to stay you; but in reality she wants you to go along with her. Well, you may go as far as the porch; but then, you must return, for we have not concluded our little affair, you know. Adieu, little lady!"

There was ever a slight degree of affectionate patronizing in the manner of the resplendent, full-blown Mrs. Glendinning, toward the delicate and shrinking girlhood of young Lucy. She treated her very much as she might have treated some surpassingly beautiful and precocious child; and this was precisely what Lucy was. Looking beyond the present period, Mrs. Glendinning could not but perceive, that even in Lucy's womanly maturity, Lucy would still be a child to her; because, she, elated, felt, that in a certain intellectual vigor, so to speak, she was the essential opposite of Lucy, whose sympathetic mind and person had both been cast in one mould of wondrous delicacy. But here Mrs. Glendinning was both right and wrong. So far as she here saw a difference between herself and Lucy Tartan, she did not err; but so far – and that was very far – as she thought she saw her

innate superiority to her in the absolute scale of being, here she very widely and immeasurably erred. For what may be artistically styled angelicalness, this is the highest essence compatible with created being; and angelicalness hath no vulgar vigor in it. And that thing which very often prompts to the display of any vigor – which thing, in man or woman, is at bottom nothing but ambition – this quality is purely earthly, and not angelical. It is false, that any angels fell by reason of ambition. Angels never fall; and never feel ambition. Therefore, benevolently, and affectionately, and all-sincerely, as thy heart, oh, Mrs. Glendinning! now standest affected toward the fleecy Lucy; still, lady, thou dost very sadly mistake it, when the proud, double-arches of the bright breastplate of thy bosom, expand with secret triumph over one, whom thou so sweetly, but still so patronizingly stylest, The Little Lucy.

But ignorant of these further insights, that very superb-looking lady, now waiting Pierre's return from the portico door, sat in a very matronly revery; her eyes fixed upon the decanter of amber-hued wine before her. Whether it was that she somehow saw some lurking analogical similitude between that remarkably slender, and gracefully cut little pint-decanter, brimfull of light, golden wine, or not, there is no absolute telling now. But really, the peculiarly, and reminiscently, and forecastingly complacent expression of her beaming and benevolent countenance, seemed a tell-tale of some conceit very much like the following: – Yes, she's a very pretty little pint-decanter of a girl: a very pretty little Pale Sherry pint-decanter of a girl; and I – I'm a quart decanter of – of – Port – potent Port! Now, Sherry for boys, and Port for men – so I've heard men say; and Pierre is but a boy; but when his father wedded me, – why, his father was turned of five-and-thirty years.

After a little further waiting for him, Mrs. Glendinning heard Pierre's voice – "Yes, before eight o'clock at least, Lucy – no fear;" and then the hall door banged, and Pierre returned to her.

But now she found that this unforeseen visit of Lucy had completely routed all business capacity in her mercurial son; fairly capsizing him again into, there was no telling what sea of pleasant pensiveness.

"Dear me! some other time, sister Mary."

"Not this time; that is very certain, Pierre. Upon my word I shall have to get Lucy kidnapped, and temporarily taken out of the country, and you handcuffed to the table, else there will be no having a preliminary understanding with you, previous to calling in the lawyers. Well, I shall yet manage you, one way or other. Good-bye, Pierre; I see you don't want me now. I suppose I shan't see you till to-morrow morning. Luckily, I have a very interesting book to read. Adieu!"

But Pierre remained in his chair; his gaze fixed upon the stilly sunset beyond the meadows, and far away to the now golden hills. A glorious, softly glorious, and most gracious evening, which seemed plainly a tongue to all humanity, saying: I go down in beauty to rise in joy; Love reigns throughout all worlds that sunsets visit; it is a foolish ghost story; there is no such thing as misery. Would Love, which is omnipotent, have misery in his domain? Would the god of sunlight decree gloom? It is a flawless, speckless, fleckless, beautiful world throughout; joy now, and joy forever!

Then the face, which before had seemed mournfully and reproachfully looking out upon him from the effulgent sunset's heart; the face slid from him; and left alone there with his soul's joy, thinking that that very night he would utter the magic word of marriage to his Lucy; not a happier youth than Pierre Glendinning sat watching that day's sun go down.

IV

AFTER this morning of gayety, this noon of tragedy, and this evening so full of chequered pensiveness; Pierre now possessed his soul in joyful mildness and steadfastness; feeling none of that wild anguish of anticipative rapture, which, in weaker minds, too often dislodges Love's sweet bird from her nest.

The early night was warm, but dark – for the moon was not risen yet – and as Pierre passed on beneath the pendulous canopies of the long arms of the weeping elms of the village, an almost

impenetrable blackness surrounded him, but entered not the gently illuminated halls of his heart. He had not gone very far, when in the distance beyond, he noticed a light moving along the opposite side of the road, and slowly approaching. As it was the custom for some of the more elderly, and perhaps timid inhabitants of the village, to carry a lantern when going abroad of so dark a night, this object conveyed no impression of novelty to Pierre; still, as it silently drew nearer and nearer, the one only distinguishable thing before him, he somehow felt a nameless presentiment that the light must be seeking him. He had nearly gained the cottage door, when the lantern crossed over toward him; and as his nimble hand was laid at last upon the little wicket-gate, which he thought was now to admit him to so much delight; a heavy hand was laid upon himself, and at the same moment, the lantern was lifted toward his face, by a hooded and obscure-looking figure, whose half-averted countenance he could but indistinctly discern. But Pierre's own open aspect, seemed to have been quickly scrutinized by the other.

"I have a letter for Pierre Glendinning," said the stranger, "and I believe this is he." At the same moment, a letter was drawn forth, and sought his hand.

"For me!" exclaimed Pierre, faintly, starting at the strangeness of the encounter; – "methinks this is an odd time and place to deliver your mail; – who are you? – Stay!"

But without waiting an answer, the messenger had already turned about, and was re-crossing the road. In the first impulse of the moment, Pierre stept forward, and would have pursued him; but smiling at his own causeless curiosity and trepidation, paused again; and softly turned over the letter in his hand. What mysterious correspondent is this, thought he, circularly moving his thumb upon the seal; no one writes me but from abroad; and their letters come through the office; and as for Lucy – pooh! – when she herself is within, she would hardly have her notes delivered at her own gate. Strange! but I'll in, and read it; – no, not that; – I come to read again in her own sweet heart – that dear missive to me from heaven, – and this impertinent letter would pre-occupy me. I'll wait till I go home.

He entered the gate, and laid his hand upon the cottage knocker. Its sudden coolness caused a slight, and, at any other time, an unaccountable sympathetic sensation in his hand. To his unwonted mood, the knocker seemed to say – "Enter not! – Begone, and first read thy note."

Yielding now, half alarmed, and half bantering with himself, to these shadowy interior monitions, he half-unconsciously quitted the door; repassed the gate; and soon found himself retracing his homeward path.

He equivocated with himself no more; the gloom of the air had now burst into his heart, and extinguished its light; then, first in all his life, Pierre felt the irresistible admonitions and intuitions of Fate.

He entered the hall unnoticed, passed up to his chamber, and hurriedly locking the door in the dark, lit his lamp. As the summoned flame illuminated the room, Pierre, standing before the round center-table, where the lamp was placed, with his hand yet on the brass circle which regulated the wick, started at a figure in the opposite mirror. It bore the outline of Pierre, but now strangely filled with features transformed, and unfamiliar to him; feverish eagerness, fear, and nameless forebodings of ill! He threw himself into a chair, and for a time vainly struggled with the incomprehensible power that possessed him. Then, as he avertedly drew the letter from his bosom, he whispered to himself – Out on thee, Pierre! how sheepish now will ye feel when this tremendous note will turn out to be an invitation to a supper to-morrow night; quick, fool, and write the stereotyped reply: Mr. Pierre Glendinning will be very happy to accept Miss so and so's polite invitation.

Still for the moment he held the letter averted. The messenger had so hurriedly accosted him, and delivered his duty, that Pierre had not yet so much as gained one glance at the superscription of the note. And now the wild thought passed through his mind of what would be the result, should he deliberately destroy the note, without so much as looking at the hand that had addressed it. Hardly had this half-crazy conceit fully made itself legible in his soul, when he was conscious of his two hands meeting in the middle of the sundered note! He leapt from his chair – By heaven! he murmured,

unspeakably shocked at the intensity of that mood which had caused him unwittingly as it were, to do for the first time in his whole life, an act of which he was privately ashamed. Though the mood that was on him was none of his own willful seeking; yet now he swiftly felt conscious that he had perhaps a little encouraged it, through that certain strange infatuation of fondness, which the human mind, however vigorous, sometimes feels for any emotion at once novel and mystical. Not willingly, at such times – never mind how fearful we may be – do we try to dissolve the spell which seems, for the time, to admit us, all astonished, into the vague vestibule of the spiritual worlds.

Pierre now seemed distinctly to feel two antagonistic agencies within him; one of which was just struggling into his consciousness, and each of which was striving for the mastery; and between whose respective final ascendencies, he thought he could perceive, though but shadowly, that he himself was to be the only umpire. One bade him finish the selfish destruction of the note; for in some dark way the reading of it would irretrievably entangle his fate. The other bade him dismiss all misgivings; not because there was no possible ground for them, but because to dismiss them was the manlier part, never mind what might betide. This good angel seemed mildly to say – Read, Pierre, though by reading thou may'st entangle thyself, yet may'st thou thereby disentangle others. Read, and feel that best blessedness which, with the sense of all duties discharged, holds happiness indifferent. The bad angel insinuatingly breathed – Read it not, dearest Pierre; but destroy it, and be happy. Then, at the blast of his noble heart, the bad angel shrunk up into nothingness; and the good one defined itself clearer and more clear, and came nigher and more nigh to him, smiling sadly but benignantly; while forth from the infinite distances wonderful harmonies stole into his heart; so that every vein in him pulsed to some heavenly swell.

V

"The name at the end of this letter will be wholly strange to thee. Hitherto my existence has been utterly unknown to thee. This letter will touch thee and pain thee. Willingly would I spare thee, but I can not. My heart bears me witness, that did I think that the suffering these lines would give thee, would, in the faintest degree, compare with what mine has been, I would forever withhold them.

"Pierre Glendinning, thou art not the only child of thy father; in the eye of the sun, the hand that traces this is thy sister's; yes, Pierre, Isabel calls thee her brother – her brother! oh, sweetest of words, which so often I have thought to myself, and almost deemed it profanity for an outcast like me to speak or think. Dearest Pierre, my brother, my own father's child! art thou an angel, that thou canst overleap all the heartless usages and fashions of a banded world, that will call thee fool, fool, fool! and curse thee, if thou yieldest to that heavenly impulse which alone can lead thee to respond to the long tyrannizing, and now at last unquenchable yearnings of my bursting heart? Oh, my brother!

"But, Pierre Glendinning, I will be proud with thee. Let not my hapless condition extinguish in me, the nobleness which I equally inherit with thee. Thou shall not be cozened, by my tears and my anguish, into any thing which thy most sober hour will repent. Read no further. If it suit thee, burn this letter; so shalt thou escape the certainty of that knowledge, which, if thou art now cold and selfish, may hereafter, in some maturer, remorseful, and helpless hour, cause thee a poignant upbraiding. No, I shall not, I will not implore thee. – Oh, my brother, my dear, dear Pierre, – help me, fly to me; see, I perish without thee; – pity, pity, – here I freeze in the wide, wide world; – no father, no mother, no sister, no brother, no living thing in the fair form of humanity, that holds me dear. No more, oh no more, dear Pierre, can I endure to be an outcast in the world, for which the dear Savior died. Fly to me, Pierre; – nay, I could tear what I now write, – as I have torn so many other sheets, all written for thy eye, but which never reached thee, because in my distraction, I knew not how to write to thee, nor what to say to thee; and so, behold again how I rave.

"Nothing more; I will write no more; – silence becomes this grave; – the heart-sickness steals over me, Pierre, my brother.

"Scarce know I what I have written. Yet will I write thee the fatal line, and leave all the rest to thee, Pierre, my brother. – She that is called Isabel Banford dwells in the little red farm-house, three miles from the village, on the slope toward the lake. To-morrow night-fall – not before – not by day, not by day, Pierre.

THY SISTER, ISABEL."

VI

THIS letter, inscribed in a feminine, but irregular hand, and in some places almost illegible, plainly attesting the state of the mind which had dictated it; – stained, too, here and there, with spots of tears, which chemically acted upon by the ink, assumed a strange and reddish hue – as if blood and not tears had dropped upon the sheet; – and so completely torn in two by Pierre's own hand, that it indeed seemed the fit scroll of a torn, as well as bleeding heart; – this amazing letter, deprived Pierre for the time of all lucid and definite thought or feeling. He hung half-lifeless in his chair; his hand, clutching the letter, was pressed against his heart, as if some assassin had stabbed him and fled; and Pierre was now holding the dagger in the wound, to stanch the outgushing of the blood.

Ay, Pierre, now indeed art thou hurt with a wound, never to be completely healed but in heaven; for thee, the before undistrusted moral beauty of the world is forever fled; for thee, thy sacred father is no more a saint; all brightness hath gone from thy hills, and all peace from thy plains; and now, now, for the first time, Pierre, Truth rolls a black billow through thy soul! Ah, miserable thou, to whom Truth, in her first tides, bears nothing but wrecks!

The perceptible forms of things; the shapes of thoughts; the pulses of life, but slowly came back to Pierre. And as the mariner, shipwrecked and cast on the beach, has much ado to escape the recoil of the wave that hurled him there; so Pierre long struggled, and struggled, to escape the recoil of that anguish, which had dashed him out of itself, upon the beach of his swoon.

But man was not made to succumb to the villain Woe. Youth is not young and a wrestler in vain. Pierre staggeringly rose to his feet; his wide eyes fixed, and his whole form in a tremble.

"Myself am left, at least," he slowly and half-chokingly murmured. "With myself I front thee! Unhand me all fears, and unlock me all spells! Henceforth I will know nothing but Truth; glad Truth, or sad Truth; I will know what is, and do what my deepest angel dictates. – The letter! – Isabel, – sister, – brother, – me, *me*– my sacred father! – This is some accursed dream! – nay, but this paper thing is forged, – a base and malicious forgery, I swear; – Well didst thou hide thy face from me, thou vile lanterned messenger, that didst accost me on the threshold of Joy, with this lying warrant of Woe! Doth Truth come in the dark, and steal on us, and rob us so, and then depart, deaf to all pursuing invocations? If this night, which now wraps my soul, be genuine as that which now wraps this half of the world; then Fate, I have a choice quarrel with thee. Thou art a palterer and a cheat; thou hast lured me on through gay gardens to a gulf. Oh! falsely guided in the days of my Joy, am I now truly led in this night of my grief? – I will be a raver, and none shall stay me! I will lift my hand in fury, for am I not struck? I will be bitter in my breath, for is not this cup of gall? Thou Black Knight, that with visor down, thus confrontest me, and mockest at me; Lo! I strike through thy helm, and will see thy face, be it Gorgon! – Let me go, ye fond affections; all piety leave me; – I will be impious, for piety hath juggled me, and taught me to revere, where I should spurn. From all idols, I tear all veils; henceforth I will see the hidden things; and live right out in my own hidden life! – Now I feel that nothing but Truth can move me so. This letter is not a forgery. Oh! Isabel, thou art my sister; and I will love thee, and protect thee, ay, and own thee through all. Ah! forgive me, ye heavens, for my ignorant ravings, and accept this my vow. – Here I swear myself Isabel's. Oh! thou poor castaway girl, that in loneliness and anguish must have long breathed that same air, which I have only inhaled for delight; thou who must even now be weeping, and weeping, cast into an ocean of

uncertainty as to thy fate, which heaven hath placed in my hands; sweet Isabel! would I not be baser than brass, and harder, and colder than ice, if I could be insensible to such claims as thine? Thou movest before me, in rainbows spun of thy tears! I see thee long weeping, and God demands me for thy comforter; and comfort thee, stand by thee, and fight for thee, will thy leapingly-acknowledging brother, whom thy own father named Pierre!"

He could not stay in his chamber: the house contracted to a nut-shell around him; the walls smote his forehead; bare-headed he rushed from the place, and only in the infinite air, found scope for that boundless expansion of his life.

BOOK IV.
RETROSPECTIVE

I

IN their precise tracings-out and subtile causations, the strongest and fieriest emotions of life defy all analytical insight. We see the cloud, and feel its bolt; but meteorology only idly essays a critical scrutiny as to how that cloud became charged, and how this bolt so stuns. The metaphysical writers confess, that the most impressive, sudden, and overwhelming event, as well as the minutest, is but the product of an infinite series of infinitely involved and untraceable foregoing occurrences. Just so with every motion of the heart. Why this cheek kindles with a noble enthusiasm; why that lip curls in scorn; these are things not wholly imputable to the immediate apparent cause, which is only one link in the chain; but to a long line of dependencies whose further part is lost in the mid-regions of the impalpable air.

Idle then would it be to attempt by any winding way so to penetrate into the heart, and memory, and inmost life, and nature of Pierre, as to show why it was that a piece of intelligence which, in the natural course of things, many amiable gentlemen, both young and old, have been known to receive with a momentary feeling of surprise, and then a little curiosity to know more, and at last an entire unconcern; idle would it be, to attempt to show how to Pierre it rolled down on his soul like melted lava, and left so deep a deposit of desolation, that all his subsequent endeavors never restored the original temples to the soil, nor all his culture completely revived its buried bloom.

But some random hints may suffice to deprive a little of its strangeness, that tumultuous mood, into which so small a note had thrown him.

There had long stood a shrine in the fresh-foliaged heart of Pierre, up to which he ascended by many tableted steps of remembrance; and around which annually he had hung fresh wreaths of a sweet and holy affection. Made one green bower of at last, by such successive votive offerings of his being; this shrine seemed, and was indeed, a place for the celebration of a chastened joy, rather than for any melancholy rites. But though thus mantled, and tangled with garlands, this shrine was of marble – a niched pillar, deemed solid and eternal, and from whose top radiated all those innumerable sculptured scrolls and branches, which supported the entire one-pillared temple of his moral life; as in some beautiful gothic oratories, one central pillar, trunk-like, upholds the roof. In this shrine, in this niche of this pillar, stood the perfect marble form of his departed father; without blemish, unclouded, snow-white, and serene; Pierre's fond personification of perfect human goodness and virtue. Before this shrine, Pierre poured out the fullness of all young life's most reverential thoughts and beliefs. Not to God had Pierre ever gone in his heart, unless by ascending the steps of that shrine, and so making it the vestibule of his abstractest religion.

Blessed and glorified in his tomb beyond Prince Mausolus is that mortal sire, who, after an honorable, pure course of life, dies, and is buried, as in a choice fountain, in the filial breast of a tender-hearted and intellectually appreciative child. For at that period, the Solomonic insights have not poured their turbid tributaries into the pure-flowing well of the childish life. Rare preservative virtue, too, have those heavenly waters. Thrown into that fountain, all sweet recollections become marbleized; so that things which in themselves were evanescent, thus became unchangeable and eternal. So, some rare waters in Derbyshire will petrify birds'-nests. But if fate preserves the father to a later time, too often the filial obsequies are less profound; the canonization less ethereal. The eye-expanded boy perceives, or vaguely thinks he perceives, slight specks and flaws in the character he once so wholly reverenced.

When Pierre was twelve years old, his father had died, leaving behind him, in the general voice of the world, a marked reputation as a gentleman and a Christian; in the heart of his wife, a green memory of many healthy days of unclouded and joyful wedded life, and in the inmost soul of Pierre, the impression of a bodily form of rare manly beauty and benignity, only rivaled by the supposed perfect mould in which his virtuous heart had been cast. Of pensive evenings, by the wide winter fire, or in summer, in the southern piazza, when that mystical night-silence so peculiar to the country would summon up in the minds of Pierre and his mother, long trains of the images of the past; leading all that spiritual procession, majestically and holily walked the venerated form of the departed husband and father. Then their talk would be reminiscent and serious, but sweet; and again, and again, still deep and deeper, was stamped in Pierre's soul the cherished conceit, that his virtuous father, so beautiful on earth, was now uncorruptibly sainted in heaven. So choicely, and in some degree, secludedly nurtured, Pierre, though now arrived at the age of nineteen, had never yet become so thoroughly initiated into that darker, though truer aspect of things, which an entire residence in the city from the earliest period of life, almost inevitably engraves upon the mind of any keenly observant and reflective youth of Pierre's present years. So that up to this period, in his breast, all remained as it had been; and to Pierre, his father's shrine seemed spotless, and still new as the marble of the tomb of him of Arimathea.

Judge, then, how all-desolating and withering the blast, that for Pierre, in one night, stripped his holiest shrine of all over-laid bloom, and buried the mild statue of the saint beneath the prostrated ruins of the soul's temple itself.

II

AS the vine flourishes, and the grape empurples close up to the very walls and muzzles of cannoned Ehrenbreitstein; so do the sweetest joys of life grow in the very jaws of its perils.

But is life, indeed, a thing for all infidel levities, and we, its misdeemed beneficiaries, so utterly fools and infatuate, that what we take to be our strongest tower of delight, only stands at the caprice of the minutest event – the falling of a leaf, the hearing of a voice, or the receipt of one little bit of paper scratched over with a few small characters by a sharpened feather? Are we so entirely insecure, that that casket, wherein we have placed our holiest and most final joy, and which we have secured by a lock of infinite deftness; can that casket be picked and desecrated at the merest stranger's touch, when we think that we alone hold the only and chosen key?

Pierre! thou art foolish; rebuild – no, not that, for thy shrine still stands; it stands, Pierre, firmly stands; smellest thou not its yet undeparted, embowering bloom? Such a note as thine can be easily enough written, Pierre; impostors are not unknown in this curious world; or the brisk novelist, Pierre, will write thee fifty such notes, and so steal gushing tears from his reader's eyes; even as *thy* note so strangely made thine own manly eyes so arid; so glazed, and so arid, Pierre – foolish Pierre!

Oh! mock not the poniarded heart. The stabbed man knows the steel; prate not to him that it is only a tickling feather. Feels he not the interior gash? What does this blood on my vesture? and what does this pang in my soul?

And here again, not unreasonably, might invocations go up to those Three Weird Ones, that tend Life's loom. Again we might ask them, What threads were those, oh, ye Weird Ones, that ye wove in the years foregone; that now to Pierre, they so unerringly conduct electric presentiments, that his woe is woe, his father no more a saint, and Isabel a sister indeed?

Ah, fathers and mothers! all the world round, be heedful, – give heed! Thy little one may not now comprehend the meaning of those words and those signs, by which, in its innocent presence, thou thinkest to disguise the sinister thing ye would hint. Not now he knows; not very much even of the externals he consciously remarks; but if, in after-life, Fate puts the chemic key of the cipher into his hands; then how swiftly and how wonderfully, he reads all the obscurest and most obliterate

inscriptions he finds in his memory; yea, and rummages himself all over, for still hidden writings to read. Oh, darkest lessons of Life have thus been read; all faith in Virtue been murdered, and youth gives itself up to an infidel scorn.

But not thus, altogether, was it now with Pierre; yet so like, in some points, that the above true warning may not misplacedly stand.

His father had died of a fever; and, as is not uncommon in such maladies, toward his end, he at intervals lowly wandered in his mind. At such times, by unobserved, but subtle arts, the devoted family attendants, had restrained his wife from being present at his side. But little Pierre, whose fond, filial love drew him ever to that bed; they heeded not innocent little Pierre, when his father was delirious; and so, one evening, when the shadows intermingled with the curtains; and all the chamber was hushed; and Pierre but dimly saw his father's face; and the fire on the hearth lay in a broken temple of wonderful coals; then a strange, plaintive, infinitely pitiable, low voice, stole forth from the testered bed; and Pierre heard, – "My daughter! my daughter!"

"He wanders again," said the nurse.

"Dear, dear father!" sobbed the child – "thou hast not a daughter, but here is thy own little Pierre."

But again the unregardful voice in the bed was heard; and now in a sudden, pealing wail, – "My daughter! – God! God! – my daughter!"

The child snatched the dying man's hand; it faintly grew to his grasp; but on the other side of the bed, the other hand now also emptily lifted itself and emptily caught, as if at some other childish fingers. Then both hands dropped on the sheet; and in the twinkling shadows of the evening little Pierre seemed to see, that while the hand which he held wore a faint, feverish flush, the other empty one was ashy white as a leper's.

"It is past," whispered the nurse, "he will wander so no more now till midnight, – that is his wont." And then, in her heart, she wondered how it was, that so excellent a gentleman, and so thoroughly good a man, should wander so ambiguously in his mind; and trembled to think of that mysterious thing in the soul, which seems to acknowledge no human jurisdiction, but in spite of the individual's own innocent self, will still dream horrid dreams, and mutter unmentionable thoughts; and into Pierre's awe-stricken, childish soul, there entered a kindred, though still more nebulous conceit. But it belonged to the spheres of the impalpable ether; and the child soon threw other and sweeter remembrances over it, and covered it up; and at last, it was blended with all other dim things, and imaginings of dimness; and so, seemed to survive to no real life in Pierre. But though through many long years the henbane showed no leaves in his soul; yet the sunken seed was there: and the first glimpse of Isabel's letter caused it to spring forth, as by magic. Then, again, the long-hushed, plaintive and infinitely pitiable voice was heard, – "My daughter! my daughter!" followed by the compunctious "God! God!" And to Pierre, once again the empty hand lifted itself, and once again the ashy hand fell.

III

IN the cold courts of justice the dull head demands oaths, and holy writ proofs; but in the warm halls of the heart one single, untestified memory's spark shall suffice to enkindle such a blaze of evidence, that all the corners of conviction are as suddenly lighted up as a midnight city by a burning building, which on every side whirls its reddened brands.

In a locked, round-windowed closet connecting with the chamber of Pierre, and whither he had always been wont to go, in those sweetly awful hours, when the spirit crieth to the spirit, Come into solitude with me, twin-brother; come away: a secret have I; let me whisper it to thee aside; in this closet, sacred to the Tadmore privacies and repose of the sometimes solitary Pierre, there hung, by long cords from the cornice, a small portrait in oil, before which Pierre had many a time trancedly stood. Had this painting hung in any annual public exhibition, and in its turn been described in print by

the casual glancing critics, they would probably have described it thus, and truthfully: "An impromptu portrait of a fine-looking, gay-hearted, youthful gentleman. He is lightly, and, as it were, airily and but grazingly seated in, or rather flittingly tenanting an old-fashioned chair of Malacca. One arm confining his hat and cane is loungingly thrown over the back of the chair, while the fingers of the other hand play with his gold watch-seal and key. The free-templed head is sideways turned, with a peculiarly bright, and care-free, morning expression. He seems as if just dropped in for a visit upon some familiar acquaintance. Altogether, the painting is exceedingly clever and cheerful; with a fine, off-handed expression about it. Undoubtedly a portrait, and no fancy-piece; and, to hazard a vague conjecture, by an amateur."

So bright, and so cheerful then; so trim, and so young; so singularly healthful, and handsome; what subtile element could so steep this whole portrait, that, to the wife of the original, it was namelessly unpleasant and repelling? The mother of Pierre could never abide this picture which she had always asserted did signally belie her husband. Her fond memories of the departed refused to hang one single wreath around it. It is not he, she would emphatically and almost indignantly exclaim, when more urgently besought to reveal the cause for so unreasonable a dissent from the opinion of nearly all the other connections and relatives of the deceased. But the portrait which she held to do justice to her husband, correctly to convey his features in detail, and more especially their truest, and finest, and noblest combined expression; this portrait was a much larger one, and in the great drawing-room below occupied the most conspicuous and honorable place on the wall.

Even to Pierre these two paintings had always seemed strangely dissimilar. And as the larger one had been painted many years after the other, and therefore brought the original pretty nearly within his own childish recollections; therefore, he himself could not but deem it by far the more truthful and life-like presentation of his father. So that the mere preference of his mother, however strong, was not at all surprising to him, but rather coincided with his own conceit. Yet not for this, must the other portrait be so decidedly rejected. Because, in the first place, there was a difference in time, and some difference of costume to be considered, and the wide difference of the styles of the respective artiste, and the wide difference of those respective, semi-reflected, ideal faces, which, even in the presence of the original, a spiritual artist will rather choose to draw from than from the fleshy face, however brilliant and fine. Moreover, while the larger portrait was that of a middle-aged, married man, and seemed to possess all the nameless and slightly portly tranquillities, incident to that condition when a felicitous one; the smaller portrait painted a brisk, unentangled, young bachelor, gayly ranging up and down in the world; light-hearted, and a very little bladish perhaps; and charged to the lips with the first uncloying morning fullness and freshness of life. Here, certainly, large allowance was to be made in any careful, candid estimation of these portraits. To Pierre this conclusion had become well-nigh irresistible, when he placed side by side two portraits of himself; one taken in his early childhood, a frocked and belted boy of four years old; and the other, a grown youth of sixteen. Except an indestructible, all-surviving something in the eyes and on the temples, Pierre could hardly recognize the loud-laughing boy in the tall, and pensively smiling youth. If a few years, then, can have in me made all this difference, why not in my father? thought Pierre.

Besides all this, Pierre considered the history, and, so to speak, the family legend of the smaller painting. In his fifteenth year, it was made a present to him by an old maiden aunt, who resided in the city, and who cherished the memory of Pierre's father, with all that wonderful amaranthine devotion which an advanced maiden sister ever feels for the idea of a beloved younger brother, now dead and irrevocably gone. As the only child of that brother, Pierre was an object of the warmest and most extravagant attachment on the part of this lonely aunt, who seemed to see, transformed into youth once again, the likeness, and very soul of her brother, in the fair, inheriting brow of Pierre. Though the portrait we speak of was inordinately prized by her, yet at length the strict canon of her romantic and imaginative love asserted the portrait to be Pierre's – for Pierre was not only his father's only child, but his namesake – so soon as Pierre should be old enough to value aright so holy and

inestimable a treasure. She had accordingly sent it to him, trebly boxed, and finally covered with a water-proof cloth; and it was delivered at Saddle Meadows, by an express, confidential messenger, an old gentleman of leisure, once her forlorn, because rejected gallant, but now her contented, and chatty neighbor. Henceforth, before a gold-framed and gold-lidded ivory miniature, – a fraternal gift – aunt Dorothea now offered up her morning and her evening rites, to the memory of the noblest and handsomest of brothers. Yet an annual visit to the far closet of Pierre – no slight undertaking now for one so stricken in years, and every way infirm – attested the earnestness of that strong sense of duty, that painful renunciation of self, which had induced her voluntarily to part with the precious memorial.

IV

"Tell me, aunt," the child Pierre had early said to her, long before the portrait became his – "tell me, aunt, how this chair-portrait, as you call it, was painted; – who painted it? – whose chair was this? – have you the chair now? – I don't see it in your room here; – what is papa looking at so strangely? – I should like to know now, what papa was thinking of, then. Do, now, dear aunt, tell me all about this picture, so that when it is mine, as you promise me, I shall know its whole history."

"Sit down, then, and be very still and attentive, my dear child," said aunt Dorothea; while she a little averted her head, and tremulously and inaccurately sought her pocket, till little Pierre cried – "Why, aunt, the story of the picture is not in any little book, is it, that you are going to take out and read to me?"

"My handkerchief, my child."

"Why, aunt, here it is, at your elbow; here, on the table; here, aunt; take it, do; Oh, don't tell me any thing about the picture, now; I won't hear it."

"Be still, my darling Pierre," said his aunt, taking the handkerchief, "draw the curtain a little, dearest; the light hurts my eyes. Now, go into the closet, and bring me my dark shawl; – take your time. – There; thank you, Pierre; now sit down again, and I will begin. – The picture was painted long ago, my child; you were not born then."

"Not born?" cried little Pierre.

"Not born," said his aunt.

"Well, go on, aunt; but don't tell me again that once upon a time I was not little Pierre at all, and yet my father was alive. Go on, aunt, – do, do!"

"Why, how nervous you are getting, my child; – Be patient; I am very old, Pierre; and old people never like to be hurried."

"Now, my own dear Aunt Dorothea, do forgive me this once, and go on with your story."

"When your poor father was quite a young man, my child, and was on one of his long autumnal visits to his friends in this city, he was rather intimate at times with a cousin of his, Ralph Winwood, who was about his own age, – a fine youth he was, too, Pierre."

"I never saw him, aunt; pray, where is he now?" interrupted Pierre; – "does he live in the country, now, as mother and I do?"

"Yes, my child; but a far-away, beautiful country, I hope; – he's in heaven, I trust."

"Dead," sighed little Pierre – "go on, aunt."

"Now, cousin Ralph had a great love for painting, my child; and he spent many hours in a room, hung all round with pictures and portraits; and there he had his easel and brushes; and much liked to paint his friends, and hang their faces on his walls; so that when all alone by himself, he yet had plenty of company, who always wore their best expressions to him, and never once ruffled him, by ever getting cross or ill-natured, little Pierre. Often, he had besought your father to sit to him; saying, that his silent circle of friends would never be complete, till your father consented to join them. But in those days, my child, your father was always in motion. It was hard for me to get him to stand still,

while I tied his cravat; for he never came to any one but me for that. So he was always putting off, and putting off cousin Ralph. 'Some other time, cousin; not to-day; – to-morrow, perhaps; – or next week;' – and so, at last cousin Ralph began to despair. But I'll catch him yet, cried sly cousin Ralph. So now he said nothing more to your father about the matter of painting him; but every pleasant morning kept his easel and brushes and every thing in readiness; so as to be ready the first moment your father should chance to drop in upon him from his long strolls; for it was now and then your father's wont to pay flying little visits to cousin Ralph in his painting-room. – But, my child, you may draw back the curtain now – it's getting very dim here, seems to me."

"Well, I thought so all along, aunt," said little Pierre, obeying; "but didn't you say the light hurt your eyes."

"But it does not now, little Pierre."

"Well, well; go on, go on, aunt; you can't think how interested I am," said little Pierre, drawing his stool close up to the quilted satin hem of his good Aunt Dorothea's dress.

"I will, my child. But first let me tell you, that about this time there arrived in the port, a cabin-full of French emigrants of quality; – poor people, Pierre, who were forced to fly from their native land, because of the cruel, blood-shedding times there. But you have read all that in the little history I gave you, a good while ago."

"I know all about it; – the French Revolution," said little Pierre.

"What a famous little scholar you are, my dear child," – said Aunt Dorothea, faintly smiling – "among those poor, but noble emigrants, there was a beautiful young girl, whose sad fate afterward made a great noise in the city, and made many eyes to weep, but in vain, for she never was heard of any more."

"How? how? aunt; – I don't understand; – did she disappear then, aunt?"

"I was a little before my story, child. Yes, she did disappear, and never was heard of again; but that was afterward, some time afterward, my child. I am very sure it was; I could take my oath of that, Pierre."

"Why, dear aunt," said little Pierre, "how earnestly you talk – after what? your voice is getting very strange; do now; – don't talk that way; you frighten me so, aunt."

"Perhaps it is this bad cold I have to-day; it makes my voice a little hoarse, I fear, Pierre. But I will try and not talk so hoarsely again. Well, my child, some time before this beautiful young lady disappeared, indeed it was only shortly after the poor emigrants landed, your father made her acquaintance; and with many other humane gentlemen of the city, provided for the wants of the strangers, for they were very poor indeed, having been stripped of every thing, save a little trifling jewelry, which could not go very far. At last, the friends of your father endeavored to dissuade him from visiting these people so much; they were fearful that as the young lady was so very beautiful, and a little inclined to be intriguing – so some said – your father might be tempted to marry her; which would not have been a wise thing in him; for though the young lady might have been very beautiful, and good-hearted, yet no one on this side the water certainly knew her history; and she was a foreigner; and would not have made so suitable and excellent a match for your father as your dear mother afterward did, my child. But, for myself, I – who always knew your father very well in all his intentions, and he was very confidential with me, too – I, for my part, never credited that he would do so unwise a thing as marry the strange young lady. At any rate, he at last discontinued his visits to the emigrants; and it was after this that the young lady disappeared. Some said that she must have voluntarily but secretly returned into her own country; and others declared that she must have been kidnapped by French emissaries; for, after her disappearance, rumor began to hint that she was of the noblest birth, and some ways allied to the royal family; and then, again, there were some who shook their heads darkly, and muttered of drownings, and other dark things; which one always hears hinted when people disappear, and no one can find them. But though your father and many other gentlemen moved heaven and earth to find trace of her, yet, as I said before, my child, she never re-appeared."

"The poor French lady!" sighed little Pierre. "Aunt, I'm afraid she was murdered."

"Poor lady, there is no telling," said his aunt. "But listen, for I am coming to the picture again. Now, at the time your father was so often visiting the emigrants, my child, cousin Ralph was one of those who a little fancied that your father was courting her; but cousin Ralph being a quiet young man, and a scholar, not well acquainted with what is wise, or what is foolish in the great world; cousin Ralph would not have been at all mortified had your father really wedded with the refugee young lady. So vainly thinking, as I told you, that your father was courting her, he fancied it would be a very fine thing if he could paint your father as her wooer; that is, paint him just after his coming from his daily visits to the emigrants. So he watched his chance; every thing being ready in his painting-room, as I told you before; and one morning, sure enough, in dropt your father from his walk. But before he came into the room, cousin Ralph had spied him from the window; and when your father entered, cousin Ralph had the sitting-chair ready drawn out, back of his easel, but still fronting toward him, and pretended to be very busy painting. He said to your father – 'Glad to see you, cousin Pierre; I am just about something here; sit right down there now, and tell me the news; and I'll sally out with you presently. And tell us something of the emigrants, cousin Pierre,' he slyly added – wishing, you see, to get your father's thoughts running that supposed wooing way, so that he might catch some sort of corresponding expression you see, little Pierre."

"I don't know that I precisely understand, aunt; but go on, I am so interested; do go on, dear aunt."

"Well, by many little cunning shifts and contrivances, cousin Ralph kept your father there sitting, and sitting in the chair, rattling and rattling away, and so self-forgetful too, that he never heeded that all the while sly cousin Ralph was painting and painting just as fast as ever he could; and only making believe laugh at your father's wit; in short, cousin Ralph was stealing his portrait, my child."

"Not *stealing* it, I hope," said Pierre, "that would be very wicked."

"Well, then, we won't call it stealing, since I am sure that cousin Ralph kept your father all the time off from him, and so, could not have possibly picked his pocket, though indeed, he slyly picked his portrait, so to speak. And if indeed it was stealing, or any thing of that sort; yet seeing how much comfort that portrait has been to me, Pierre, and how much it will yet be to you, I hope; I think we must very heartily forgive cousin Ralph, for what he then did."

"Yes, I think we must indeed," chimed in little Pierre, now eagerly eying the very portrait in question, which hung over the mantle.

"Well, by catching your father two or three times more in that way, cousin Ralph at last finished the painting; and when it was all framed, and every way completed, he would have surprised your father by hanging it boldly up in his room among his other portraits, had not your father one morning suddenly come to him – while, indeed, the very picture itself was placed face down on a table and cousin Ralph fixing the cord to it – came to him, and frightened cousin Ralph by quietly saying, that now that he thought of it, it seemed to him that cousin Ralph had been playing tricks with him; but he hoped it was not so. 'What do you mean?' said cousin Ralph, a little flurried. 'You have not been hanging my portrait up here, have you, cousin Ralph?' said your father, glancing along the walls. 'I'm glad I don't see it. It is my whim, cousin Ralph, – and perhaps it is a very silly one, – but if you have been lately painting my portrait, I want you to destroy it; at any rate, don't show it to any one, keep it out of sight. What's that you have there, cousin Ralph?'

"Cousin Ralph was now more and more fluttered; not knowing what to make – as indeed, to this day, I don't completely myself – of your father's strange manner. But he rallied, and said – 'This, cousin Pierre, is a secret portrait I have here; you must be aware that we portrait-painters are sometimes called upon to paint such. I, therefore, can not show it to you, or tell you any thing about it.'

"'Have you been painting my portrait or not, cousin Ralph?' said your father, very suddenly and pointedly.

"'I have painted nothing that looks as you there look,' said cousin Ralph, evasively, observing in your father's face a fierce-like expression, which he had never seen there before. And more than that, your father could not get from him."

"And what then?" said little Pierre.

"Why not much, my child; only your father never so much as caught one glimpse of that picture; indeed, never knew for certain, whether there was such a painting in the world. Cousin Ralph secretly gave it to me, knowing how tenderly I loved your father; making me solemnly promise never to expose it anywhere where your father could ever see it, or any way hear of it. This promise I faithfully kept; and it was only after your dear father's death, that I hung it in my chamber. There, Pierre, you now have the story of the chair-portrait."

"And a very strange one it is," said Pierre – "and so interesting, I shall never forget it, aunt."

"I hope you never will, my child. Now ring the bell, and we will have a little fruit-cake, and I will take a glass of wine, Pierre; – do you hear, my child? – the bell – ring it. Why, what do you do standing there, Pierre?"

"*Why* didn't papa want to have cousin Ralph paint his picture, aunt?"

"How these children's minds do run!" exclaimed old aunt Dorothea staring at little Pierre in amazement – "That indeed is more than I can tell you, little Pierre. But cousin Ralph had a foolish fancy about it. He used to tell me, that being in your father's room some few days after the last scene I described, he noticed there a very wonderful work on Physiognomy, as they call it, in which the strangest and shadowiest rules were laid down for detecting people's innermost secrets by studying their faces. And so, foolish cousin Ralph always flattered himself, that the reason your father did not want his portrait taken was, because he was secretly in love with the French young lady, and did not want his secret published in a portrait; since the wonderful work on Physiognomy had, as it were, indirectly warned him against running that risk. But cousin Ralph being such a retired and solitary sort of a youth, he always had such curious whimsies about things. For my part, I don't believe your father ever had any such ridiculous ideas on the subject. To be sure, I myself can not tell you *why* he did not want his picture taken; but when you get to be as old as I am, little Pierre, you will find that every one, even the best of us, at times, is apt to act very queerly and unaccountably; indeed some things we do, we can not entirely explain the reason of, even to ourselves, little Pierre. But you will know all about these strange matters by and by."

"I hope I shall, aunt," said little Pierre – "But, dear aunt, I thought Marten was to bring in some fruit-cake?"

"Ring the bell for him, then, my child."

"Oh! I forgot," said little Pierre, doing her bidding.

By-and-by, while the aunt was sipping her wine; and the boy eating his cake, and both their eyes were fixed on the portrait in question; little Pierre, pushing his stool nearer the picture exclaimed – "Now, aunt, did papa really look exactly like that? Did you ever see him in that same buff vest, and huge-figured neckcloth? I remember the seal and key, pretty well; and it was only a week ago that I saw mamma take them out of a little locked drawer in her wardrobe – but I don't remember the queer whiskers; nor the buff vest; nor the huge white-figured neckcloth; did you ever see papa in that very neckcloth, aunt?"

"My child, it was I that chose the stuff for that neckcloth; yes, and hemmed it for him, and worked P. G. in one corner; but that aint in the picture. It is an excellent likeness, my child, neckcloth and all; as he looked at that time. Why, little Pierre, sometimes I sit here all alone by myself, gazing, and gazing, and gazing at that face, till I begin to think your father is looking at me, and smiling at me, and nodding at me, and saying – Dorothea! Dorothea!"

"How strange," said little Pierre, "I think it begins to look at me now, aunt. Hark! aunt, it's so silent all round in this old-fashioned room, that I think I hear a little jingling in the picture, as if the watch-seal was striking against the key – Hark! aunt."

"Bless me, don't talk so strangely, my child."

"I heard mamma say once – but she did not say so to me – that, for her part, she did not like aunt Dorothea's picture; it was not a good likeness, so she said. Why don't mamma like the picture, aunt?"

"My child, you ask very queer questions. If your mamma don't like the picture, it is for a very plain reason. She has a much larger and finer one at home, which she had painted for herself; yes, and paid I don't know how many hundred dollars for it; and that, too, is an excellent likeness, *that* must be the reason, little Pierre."

And thus the old aunt and the little child ran on; each thinking the other very strange; and both thinking the picture still stranger; and the face in the picture still looked at them frankly, and cheerfully, as if there was nothing kept concealed; and yet again, a little ambiguously and mockingly, as if slyly winking to some other picture, to mark what a very foolish old sister, and what a very silly little son, were growing so monstrously grave and speculative about a huge white-figured neckcloth, a buff vest, and a very gentleman-like and amiable countenance.

And so, after this scene, as usual, one by one, the fleet years ran on; till the little child Pierre had grown up to be the tall Master Pierre, and could call the picture his own; and now, in the privacy of his own little closet, could stand, or lean, or sit before it all day long, if he pleased, and keep thinking, and thinking, and thinking, and thinking, till by-and-by all thoughts were blurred, and at last there were no thoughts at all.

Before the picture was sent to him, in his fifteenth year, it had been only through the inadvertence of his mother, or rather through a casual passing into a parlor by Pierre, that he had any way learned that his mother did not approve of the picture. Because, as then Pierre was still young, and the picture was the picture of his father, and the cherished property of a most excellent, and dearly-beloved, affectionate aunt; therefore the mother, with an intuitive delicacy, had refrained from knowingly expressing her peculiar opinion in the presence of little Pierre. And this judicious, though half-unconscious delicacy in the mother, had been perhaps somewhat singularly answered by a like nicety of sentiment in the child; for children of a naturally refined organization, and a gentle nurture, sometimes possess a wonderful, and often undreamed of, daintiness of propriety, and thoughtfulness, and forbearance, in matters esteemed a little subtile even by their elders, and self-elected betters. The little Pierre never disclosed to his mother that he had, through another person, become aware of her thoughts concerning Aunt Dorothea's portrait; he seemed to possess an intuitive knowledge of the circumstance, that from the difference of their relationship to his father, and for other minute reasons, he could in some things, with the greater propriety, be more inquisitive concerning him, with his aunt, than with his mother, especially touching the matter of the chair-portrait. And Aunt Dorothea's reasons accounting for his mother's distaste, long continued satisfactory, or at least not unsufficiently explanatory.

And when the portrait arrived at the Meadows, it so chanced that his mother was abroad; and so Pierre silently hung it up in his closet; and when after a day or two his mother returned, he said nothing to her about its arrival, being still strangely alive to that certain mild mystery which invested it, and whose sacredness now he was fearful of violating, by provoking any discussion with his mother about Aunt Dorothea's gift, or by permitting himself to be improperly curious concerning the reasons of his mother's private and self-reserved opinions of it. But the first time – and it was not long after the arrival of the portrait – that he knew of his mother's having entered his closet; then, when he next saw her, he was prepared to hear what she should voluntarily say about the late addition to its embellishments; but as she omitted all mention of any thing of that sort, he unobtrusively scanned her countenance, to mark whether any little clouding emotion might be discoverable there. But he could discern none. And as all genuine delicacies are by their nature accumulative; therefore this reverential, mutual, but only tacit forbearance of the mother and son, ever after continued uninvaded. And it was another sweet, and sanctified, and sanctifying bond between them. For, whatever some lovers may sometimes say, love does not always abhor a secret, as nature is said to abhor a vacuum.

Love is built upon secrets, as lovely Venice upon invisible and incorruptible piles in the sea. Love's secrets, being mysteries, ever pertain to the transcendent and the infinite; and so they are as airy bridges, by which our further shadows pass over into the regions of the golden mists and exhalations; whence all poetical, lovely thoughts are engendered, and drop into us, as though pearls should drop from rainbows.

As time went on, the chasteness and pure virginity of this mutual reservation, only served to dress the portrait in sweeter, because still more mysterious attractions; and to fling, as it were, fresh fennel and rosemary around the revered memory of the father. Though, indeed, as previously recounted, Pierre now and then loved to present to himself for some fanciful solution the penultimate secret of the portrait, in so far, as that involved his mother's distaste; yet the cunning analysis in which such a mental procedure would involve him, never voluntarily transgressed that sacred limit, where his mother's peculiar repugnance began to shade off into ambiguous considerations, touching any unknown possibilities in the character and early life of the original. Not, that he had altogether forbidden his fancy to range in such fields of speculation; but all such imaginings must be contributory to that pure, exalted idea of his father, which, in his soul, was based upon the known acknowledged facts of his father's life.

V

IF, when the mind roams up and down in the ever-elastic regions of evanescent invention, any definite form or feature can be assigned to the multitudinous shapes it creates out of the incessant dissolvings of its own prior creations; then might we here attempt to hold and define the least shadowy of those reasons, which about the period of adolescence we now treat of, more frequently occurred to Pierre, whenever he essayed to account for his mother's remarkable distaste for the portrait. Yet will we venture one sketch.

Yes – sometimes dimly thought Pierre – who knows but cousin Ralph, after all, may have been not so very far from the truth, when he surmised that at one time my father did indeed cherish some passing emotion for the beautiful young Frenchwoman. And this portrait being painted at that precise time, and indeed with the precise purpose of perpetuating some shadowy testification of the fact in the countenance of the original: therefore, its expression is not congenial, is not familiar, is not altogether agreeable to my mother: because, not only did my father's features never look so to her (since it was afterward that she first became acquainted with him), but also, that certain womanliness of women; that thing I should perhaps call a tender jealousy, a fastidious vanity, in any other lady, enables her to perceive that the glance of the face in the portrait, is not, in some nameless way, dedicated to herself, but to some other and unknown object; and therefore, is she impatient of it, and it is repelling to her; for she must naturally be intolerant of any imputed reminiscence in my father, which is not in some way connected with her own recollections of him.

Whereas, the larger and more expansive portrait in the great drawing-room, taken in the prime of life; during the best and rosiest days of their wedded union; at the particular desire of my mother; and by a celebrated artist of her own election, and costumed after her own taste; and on all hands considered to be, by those who know, a singularly happy likeness at the period; a belief spiritually reinforced by my own dim infantile remembrances; for all these reasons, this drawing-room portrait possesses an inestimable charm to her; there, she indeed beholds her husband as he had really appeared to her; she does not vacantly gaze upon an unfamiliar phantom called up from the distant, and, to her, well-nigh fabulous days of my father's bachelor life. But in that other portrait, she sees rehearsed to her fond eyes, the latter tales and legends of his devoted wedded love. Yes, I think now that I plainly see it must be so. And yet, ever new conceits come vaporing up in me, as I look on the strange chair-portrait: which, though so very much more unfamiliar to me, than it can possibly be to my mother, still sometimes seems to say – Pierre, believe not the drawing-room painting; that

is not thy father; or, at least, is not *all* of thy father. Consider in thy mind, Pierre, whether we two paintings may not make only one. Faithful wives are ever over-fond to a certain imaginary image of their husbands; and faithful widows are ever over-reverential to a certain imagined ghost of that same imagined image, Pierre. Look again, I am thy father as he more truly was. In mature life, the world overlays and varnishes us, Pierre; the thousand proprieties and polished finenesses and grimaces intervene, Pierre; then, we, as it were, abdicate ourselves, and take unto us another self, Pierre; in youth we *are*, Pierre, but in age we *seem*. Look again. I am thy real father, so much the more truly, as thou thinkest thou recognizest me not, Pierre. To their young children, fathers are not wont to unfold themselves entirely, Pierre. There are a thousand and one odd little youthful peccadilloes, that we think we may as well not divulge to them, Pierre. Consider this strange, ambiguous smile, Pierre; more narrowly regard this mouth. Behold, what is this too ardent and, as it were, unchastened light in these eyes, Pierre? I am thy father, boy. There was once a certain, oh, but too lovely young Frenchwoman, Pierre. Youth is hot, and temptation strong, Pierre; and in the minutest moment momentous things are irrevocably done, Pierre; and Time sweeps on, and the thing is not always carried down by its stream, but may be left stranded on its bank; away beyond, in the young, green countries, Pierre. Look again. Doth thy mother dislike me for naught? Consider. Do not all her spontaneous, loving impressions, ever strive to magnify, and spiritualize, and deify, her husband's memory, Pierre? Then why doth she cast despite upon me; and never speak to thee of me; and why dost thou thyself keep silence before her, Pierre? Consider. Is there no little mystery here? Probe a little, Pierre. Never fear, never fear. No matter for thy father now. Look, do I not smile? – yes, and with an unchangeable smile; and thus have I unchangeably smiled for many long years gone by, Pierre. Oh, it is a permanent smile! Thus I smiled to cousin Ralph; and thus in thy dear old Aunt Dorothea's parlor, Pierre; and just so, I smile here to thee, and even thus in thy father's later life, when his body may have been in grief, still – hidden away in Aunt Dorothea's secretary – I thus smiled as before; and just so I'd smile were I now hung up in the deepest dungeon of the Spanish Inquisition, Pierre; though suspended in outer darkness, still would I smile with this smile, though then not a soul should be near. Consider; for a smile is the chosen vehicle for all ambiguities, Pierre. When we would deceive, we smile; when we are hatching any nice little artifice, Pierre; only just a little gratifying our own sweet little appetites, Pierre; then watch us, and out comes the odd little smile. Once upon a time, there was a lovely young Frenchwoman, Pierre. Have you carefully, and analytically, and psychologically, and metaphysically, considered her belongings and surroundings, and all her incidentals, Pierre? Oh, a strange sort of story, that, thy dear old Aunt Dorothea once told thee, Pierre. I once knew a credulous old soul, Pierre. Probe, probe a little – see – there seems one little crack there, Pierre – a wedge, a wedge. Something ever comes of all persistent inquiry; we are not so continually curious for nothing, Pierre; not for nothing, do we so intrigue and become wily diplomatists, and glozers with our own minds, Pierre; and afraid of following the Indian trail from the open plain into the dark thickets, Pierre; but enough; a word to the wise.

Thus sometimes in the mystical, outer quietude of the long country nights; either when the hushed mansion was banked round by the thick-fallen December snows, or banked round by the immovable white August moonlight; in the haunted repose of a wide story, tenanted only by himself; and sentineling his own little closet; and standing guard, as it were, before the mystical tent of the picture; and ever watching the strangely concealed lights of the meanings that so mysteriously moved to and fro within; thus sometimes stood Pierre before the portrait of his father, unconsciously throwing himself open to all those ineffable hints and ambiguities, and undefined half-suggestions, which now and then people the soul's atmosphere, as thickly as in a soft, steady snow-storm, the snow-flakes people the air. Yet as often starting from these reveries and trances, Pierre would regain the assured element of consciously bidden and self-propelled thought; and then in a moment the air all cleared, not a snow-flake descended, and Pierre, upbraiding himself for his self-indulgent infatuation, would promise never again to fall into a midnight revery before the chair-portrait of his father. Nor did the

streams of these reveries seem to leave any conscious sediment in his mind; they were so light and so rapid, that they rolled their own alluvial along; and seemed to leave all Pierre's thought-channels as clean and dry as though never any alluvial stream had rolled there at all.

And so still in his sober, cherishing memories, his father's beatification remained untouched; and all the strangeness of the portrait only served to invest his idea with a fine, legendary romance; the essence whereof was that very mystery, which at other times was so subtly and evilly significant.

But now, *now!*– Isabel's letter read: swift as the first light that slides from the sun, Pierre saw all preceding ambiguities, all mysteries ripped open as if with a keen sword, and forth trooped thickening phantoms of an infinite gloom. Now his remotest infantile reminiscences – the wandering mind of his father – the empty hand, and the ashen – the strange story of Aunt Dorothea – the mystical midnight suggestions of the portrait itself; and, above all, his mother's intuitive aversion, all, all overwhelmed him with reciprocal testimonies.

And now, by irresistible intuitions, all that had been inexplicably mysterious to him in the portrait, and all that had been inexplicably familiar in the face, most magically these now coincided; the merriness of the one not inharmonious with the mournfulness of the other, but by some ineffable correlativeness, they reciprocally identified each other, and, as it were, melted into each other, and thus interpenetratingly uniting, presented lineaments of an added supernaturalness.

On all sides, the physical world of solid objects now slidingly displaced itself from around him, and he floated into an ether of visions; and, starting to his feet with clenched hands and outstaring eyes at the transfixed face in the air, he ejaculated that wonderful verse from Dante, descriptive of the two mutually absorbing shapes in the Inferno:

"Ah! how dost thou change,
Agnello! See! thou art not double now,
Nor only one!"

BOOK V.
MISGIVINGS AND PREPARATIONS

I

IT was long after midnight when Pierre returned to the house. He had rushed forth in that complete abandonment of soul, which, in so ardent a temperament, attends the first stages of any sudden and tremendous affliction; but now he returned in pallid composure, for the calm spirit of the night, and the then risen moon, and the late revealed stars, had all at last become as a strange subduing melody to him, which, though at first trampled and scorned, yet by degrees had stolen into the windings of his heart, and so shed abroad its own quietude in him. Now, from his height of composure, he firmly gazed abroad upon the charred landscape within him; as the timber man of Canada, forced to fly from the conflagration of his forests, comes back again when the fires have waned, and unblinkingly eyes the immeasurable fields of fire-brands that here and there glow beneath the wide canopy of smoke.

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