

**MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY**



**THE SWISS  
PEASANT**

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**I.**

Why is the mind of man so apt to be swayed by contraries? why does the imagination for ever paint the impossible in glittering tints, and the hearts of wayward mortals cling, with the greatest tenacity, to what, eel-like, is bent on escaping from their grasp? Why — to bring the matter home— is solitude abhorrent to me, now that I enjoy it in perfection? I have apostrophized the coy nymph in ball-rooms, when the bright lamps of heaven were shamed by brighter earth-stars, and lamented her absence at a picnic party, where the nightingale was silenced by the fiddle.