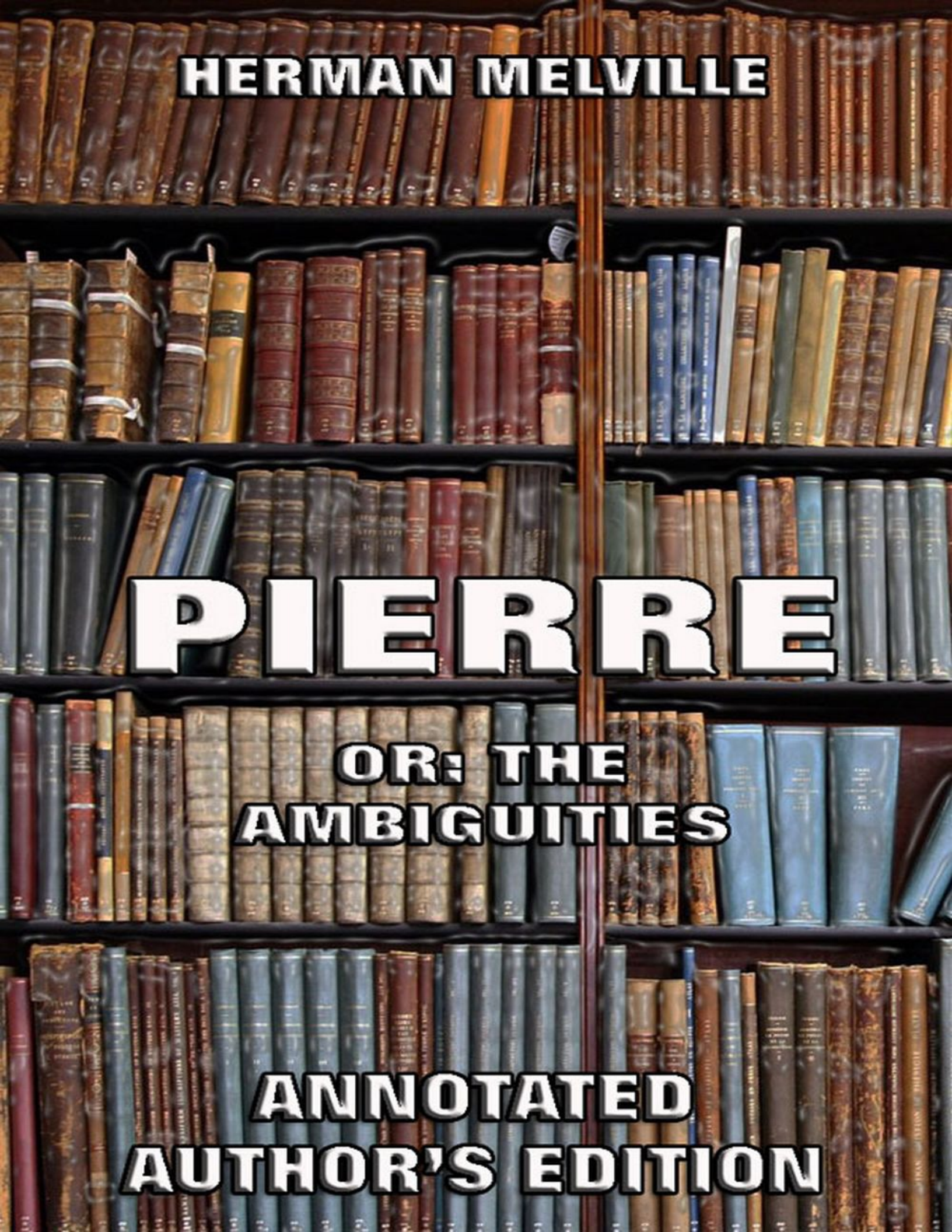
HERMAN MELVILLE
PIERRE
OR: THE AMBIGUITIES
ANNOTATED AUTHOR'S EDITION

Pierre: Or, The Ambiguities

Herman Melville

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HERMAN MELVILLE – A PRIMER

CONSIDERED as a seed-time of eminent names, the year 1819 was one of remarkable fertility. Keeping to England and the United States alone, in that year were born Herman Melville, John Ruskin, J. R. Lowell, Walt Whitman,

Charles Kingsley, W. W. Story, T. W. Parsons, C. A. Dana, E. P. Whipple, J. G. Holland, H. P. Gray, Thomas Hall, Cyrus Field, Julia Ward Howe, and Queen Victoria.

Of these names, which will endure the longer as author or artist? It seems to me that Melville's Typee has an intrinsic charm, born of concurring genius and circumstance, that make it surer of immortality than any other work by any other name on the list — not even excepting Queen Victoria's Journal in the Highlands. Hut re-incarnation is not as yet, and who shall know the future dealings of fate with these various fames?

But I am anticipating. Let me give a brief outline of the events of Melville's life, and indicate— within these limits I can do no more— how directly his writings flowed from real experience, like water from a spring. Melville was born August 1, 1819, the third in a family of eight children, in New York City — the last place that one looks for a poet to be born in. Eminent men generally, according to popular statistic-, are born in the country; they nourish their genius there, and come to town to win their fame. If this theory has any truth, it is simply due to the fact that more people are born in the country, anyway, than in the town; a circumstance that does not occur to the popular statisticians. In 1835 young Melville attended the " Albany Classical School; " his teacher, Dr. Charles E. West, still lives in Brooklyn, and makes an occasional appearance at the Saturday evenings of the Century Club. He speaks of his pupil as having been distinguished in English composition and weak in mathematics.

In 1837, when Melville was eighteen, he made his first voyage before the mast in a New York merchantman bound for Liverpool, returning after a short cruise. The record of this first voyage will be found in Redburn, which, however,

was not his first but his fourth book, having been published in 1849. For three years young Melville had had enough of the sea. He spent the summer of 1838 working on his uncle's farm in Pittsfield, Mass., and at intervals he taught school, both there and in Greenbush, now East Albany, New York. This sea-going and this school-teaching were undertaken in the pluckiest spirit for self-support, his father being then in straitened circumstances. Hut the seeds of adventure and unrest were also in his nature; and he shipped again before the mast in the whaler "Acushnet," sailing from New Bedford, January 1, 1841. This was the voyage that gave him his opportunity. In the summer of 1842, as detailed in the true history, Typee, he left his ship at the Hay of Nukuheva, in the Marquesas Islands, escaping to the Typee Valley. There he received from the natives the kindest treatment, and lived deliriously all the summer long; while, on the other hand, he was in constant fear of being sacrificed at any moment to their cannibal proclivities. He spent four months in this anxious paradise; finally he escaped from the valley to an Australian whaler, where he resumed the life of the forecastle. It would be curious to know whether any of the rough sailors with whom he herded during these tossing years recognized the presence of his gifts in their shipmate; in all probability they did not.

The Australian whaler touched at some of the smaller islands, and anchored at Tahiti on the day of its occupation by the French. These were stirring times in that peaceful group, and the young poet, as he sets forth in Omoo, was confined for alleged mutinous conduct, with others of his companions, but was honorably discharged. From Tahiti he made his way to Honolulu, where he spent four months. He has left some record of that time in the very biting comments upon political and missionary affairs, that may be found in the appendix to the English edition of Typee; an

appendix, by the way, that is discreetly suppressed in the American edition. To get a passage homeward he shipped for the fourth time before the mast, this time upon the United States frigate "United States," then (I think) commanded by Captain James Armstrong, and thus added the experience of man-of-war service to that of life on a New York merchantman and on American and English whaling-ships. He spent more than a year upon the frigate, and was discharged in Boston in the fall of 1844. He then returned to his mother's home in Lansingburgh, and began the literary work for which he had such varied, ample, and profoundly interesting material. Typee was written during the winter of 1845-46, and published in London and New York in 1846. Its success was immediate and great. The entire English reading-world knew Melville's name, if not the book itself; it was the talk of the public and of the coteries. Omoo, which followed shortly after, was very well received, but not so widely read. August 4, 1847, he married the daughter of Chief-Justice Shaw of Massachusetts, removed to New York, and lived there until 1850. Meanwhile he published Mardi, a South Sea romance, prefacing a note to the effect that, as Typee and Omoo had been received as romance instead of reality, he would now enter the field of avowed fiction. In the same year, 1849, was published Redburn, the record, as already noted, of his first voyage before the mast.

In 1850 Melville went to Pittsfield, Mass., and lived there thirteen years, returning to New York again in October, 1863; and here he spent the remainder of his life, with the exception of two brief visits to Europe and a voyage to California. Leaving New York, October 8, 1849, he went to London to arrange for the publication of his works, returning about the first of February, 1850. He now addressed himself to writing While Jacket, a most vivid record of his man-of-war experience; it was published in

1850. Moby Dick, the story of the great White Whale, appeared in 1851; the novel, Pierre, or The Ambiguities, in 1852; Israel Patter and The Confidence Man 1855, and the Piazza Tales in 1856. All of Melville's works, except Clarel, were published almost as soon as written.

During these years Melville applied himself so closely to literary work that his health became impaired, and he made another visit to England, sailing October II, and returning in May, 1857. During this time he visited his old friend, Nathaniel Hawthorne, at Southport; went up the Mediterranean, saw Constantinople and the Holy Land, and returned with new material for future work; but from this time he published little for some years. During the winters 1857 to 1860, however, he gave lectures in different cities, touching a large range of subjects: "The South Seas," "Travel," "Statues in Rome," among others. In 1860 he made a voyage to San Francisco via Cape Horn, sailing from Boston May 30, with his brother, Thomas Melville, who commanded the "Meteor," a fast-sailing clipper in the China trade, and returning in mid-November. In 1866 his poems, Baltic Pieces, were published; and on the fifth of December of that year he was appointed collector of customs in the New York Custom House by Henry A. Smyth, an office which he held for nineteen years and resigned the first of January, 1866. In the interim, 1876, his Clarel appeared, a work of which the germ had been unfolding for many years; his visit to the Holy Land gave much of the material and imagery in it. His latest books were privately printed. A copy of Jo/in Marr and Other Sailors, and one of his Timoleon, lie before me; each of these volumes of poetry appeared in an edition of twenty-five copies only. With these closed the exterior record of a life of extreme contrasts — years of the most restless activity, followed by a most unusual seclusion.

These data, now for the first time fully given, will help us to characterize Melville's life and literary work. Typee and Omoo, mistaken by the public for fiction, were, on the contrary, the most vivid truth expressed in the most telling and poetic manner. My father, the Rev. Titus Coan, went over Melville's ground in 1867, and while he has criticised the topography of Typee as being somewhat exaggerated in the mountain distances, a very natural mistake, he told me that the descriptions were admirably true and the characterizations faultless in the main. The book is a masterpiece, the outcome of an opportunity that will never be repeated. Melville was the first and only man ever made captive in a valley full of Polynesian cannibals, who had the genius to describe the situation, and who got away alive to write his book.

His later works, equally great in their way — While Jacket and Moby Dick — had a different though equal misappreciation. They dealt with a life so alien to that of the average reader that they failed adequately to interest him; but they are life and truth itself. On this matter I may speak with some authority, for I have spent years at sea, and I cannot overpraise the wonderful vigor and beauty of these descriptions. The later works were less powerful, and Pierre roused a storm of critical opposition. Yet these misunderstandings and attacks were not the main cause of his withdrawal from society. The cause was intrinsic; his extremely proud and sensitive nature and his studious habits led to the seclusion of his later years. My acquaintance with Melville began in 1859, when I had a most interesting conversation with him at his home in Pittsfield, and wrote of him as follows:

In vain I sought to hear of "Typee " and those paradise islands; he preferred to pour forth instead his philosophy and his theories of life. The shade of Aristotle arose like a

cold mist between myself and Fayaway. . . . He seems to put away the objective side of life, and to shut himself up as a cloistered thinker and poet. This seclusion endured to the end. He never denied himself to his friends; but he sought no one. I visited him repeatedly in New York, and had the most interesting talks with him. What stores of reading, what reaches of philosophy, were his I He took the attitude of absolute independence toward the world. He said, " My books will speak for themselves, and all the better if I avoid the rattling egotism by which so many win a certain vogue for a certain time." He missed immediate success; he won the distinction of a hermit. It may appear, in the end, that he was right. No other autobiographical books in our literature suggest more vividly than Typee, Omoo, White Jacket, and Moby Dick, the title of Goethe, "Truth and Beauty from my own life." Typee, at least, is one of those books that the world cannot let die.

In conclusion: does any one know whether the "Toby" of Typee, Mr. Richard T. Greene, is living? He has disappeared from ken a second time, as heretofore he disappeared from " Tommo " in Typee Valley; has he gone where a second quest would be useless? If not, and if this meets the eye of any friend of his, will he send me word?

PIERRE: OR, THE AMBIGUITIES

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