

the sunlight falls upon glittering snow and shimmering ice as upon a vast sea of glass; and he feels as if surrounded by the unseen hosts of heaven—as if he stood in the immediate presence of the Divine Power!

Less sublime, but not less singular the scene, if the traveller should content himself with making his way across one of the precipitous passes which afford an opening into the mountain-region. Around, in a majesty which has something of the wild and savage in it, rise hundreds of icy pinnacles and white cold peaks, which are scarcely ever reached by human foot—scarcely even by the mountain goat. No philosopher has hitherto comprehended the laws of their confused and irregular accumulation; little is known of their fragments of a vegetable and animal world; but along their grim gaunt sides winds the noisy caravan of commerce. The braying post-horn echoes among their heights, blending its sounds with the ringing bells of the mules and the voices of men speaking in many tongues. But by all this stir and tumult the Alpine giants are unmoved. With the glittering crown of eternity on their anointed heads, they continue their long, long sleep—dreaming, mayhap, of the primeval ocean-billows that once roared against them—of the throes and tumult which marked their upheaval from the great central fire—of the radiant molluscs and fishes that in the times of old disported in their winding creeks and deep recesses;—then, how the waters slowly ebbed away; how the luxuriant blossoms and tapering palms of a rich new world began to flourish on their summits, or how the chestnut and the lime hung their slopes with fresh green foliage; and, again, how all life eventually sank down into the mysterious depths—how the storms swept away their outer stratum of soil—how cold blasts prevailed instead of warm winds, and angry clouds instead of laughing skies—how the winters grew longer, and the brief summers stinted the much-needed supply of sunshine; until rain and vapour congealed into snow—into snow which yearly clung closer to their sides, crept down to the very edge of the valleys, and mantled them in a mail of impenetrable brightness—while the spirit of the Winter reigned ever-