

bassalian fauna, and brought up the very prototype of its own mechanism.

But see! somebody is here with a lantern. How sleepily the light gleams in the darkness. There is no fire in it. Something it is. An animated lantern. A lantern without a flame. It is another strange fish. It is phosphorescence which gleams mildly from his shiny sides. Still another lantern-bearing fish. Here are luminous plates beneath the eyes; behind them, in a cavity, retinal tissue, as if these structures were planned for eyes; but they are not eyes. Real eyes are present. We discover, then, faint relief from the palpable darkness in which we have groped.

But our task is done; our curiosity is gratified; we have glimpsed the underworld, and have gathered observations on which we shall ponder many a day. Let us now, like the heroes of epic song, ascend to the light of the upper world.

XI. BY THE ROCKY WALL.

STRATA AND THEIR CLASSIFICATION.

LET us walk in front of the precipice which frowns along the hill-side near the village of Panama, on the west. It is no more instructive than a thousand other cliffs, but it may be more convenient to reach. The cliff rises fifty or sixty feet and presents a broken and rugged front. The brown and yellowish rock is composed of fine silicious grains, with small imbedded pebbles, and thus answers the description of a conglomeritic sandstone. The face of the cliff shows several yawning fissures extending from bottom to top. The winter snow drifts into these in such abundance as to remain, sometimes, till midsummer. One of these chasms is known, therefore, as the "Ice House." You observe that this precipice is composed of layers of sandstone piled one above the other. These are *strata*, and the whole formation is *stratified*. [Notice that one of these layers is a *stratum*—not "a strata;" and we must never say "stratas."] You observe, also, that some of