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essays to open the oyster of the poetical world with the sword of a romantic epic. Bearing evidence at times, in its grandiose anthropomorphism of natural phenomena, of the influence of "his old masters, the French Symbolists," the poem of this future champion of a concrete modernity challenges, at any rate in the gigantic massing of its imagery, that great if somewhat bourgeois romanticist, Victor Hugo. For here poetic Pelion is piled upon poetic Ossa with the most drastic vengeance. For the Sovereign Sea, chanting her inaugural battle-cry

"Hols-hé! Hols-ho! Stridionla Stridionla Stridionlaire!"

to her ancient waves, puissant warriors with venerable beards of am, lashes them to conquer Space and mount to the assault of the grinning Stars. And missiles are there in her Reservoir of Death—"petrified bodies, bodies of steel, embers and gold, harder than the diamond, the suicides whose courage failed beneath the weight of their heart, that furnace of stars, those who died for what they stoked within their blood the fire of the Ideal, the great flame of the Absolute that encompassed them." And for an army has she the legions of her amazon cavalry, the Veterans of the Sea, the great waves, the riotous, prancing Narwhals with their scaly rings, the typhoons, the cyclones, and the haughty Trombes (water-spouts), "draping around their loins their fuliginous veils, or lifting masses of darkness in their great open arms." And so this feud of the elements proceeds from climax to climax, from crescendo to crescendo, till the astral fortresses succumb to the shock of an infernal charge, and the last star expires "with her pupils of grey shadow imploring the Unknown, oh! how sweetly!"

No doubt the poem almost reels at times as though intoxicated with the excesses of its own imagery. Yet, making all the discount for this healthy turgidity of adolescence, it is impossible to dispute the authentic poetical value of this brilliant epic.

By so masterly a grasp is the metre handled that the reader, quite oblivious of the immaterial question of whether he is perusing verse or prose, is only conscious of the ideas and emotions themselves. The following passage is typical, not only of the poem's potency of expression, but of the intimate union which is effected between the meaning and the form:—

"C'est ainsi que passe le Simoun  
aiguillonnant sa furie de désert en désert,  
avec son escorte caracolante  
de sables soulevés tout ruisselants de feu;  
c'est ainsi que le Simoun galope  
sur l'océan figé des sables,  
en balançant son torse géant d'idole barbare  
sur des fuyantes croupes d'onagres affolés."