

sion of dull, half-smothered sounds, from the bowels of the earth ; and at times, when in contact with the naked rock, I could feel, as the subterranean thunder pealed through the abyss, the solid mass trembling beneath me. The phenomena were those described by Wordsworth, as eliciting, in a scene of deep solitude, the mingled astonishment and terror of Peter Bell,—

“ When, to confound his spiteful mirth,
A murmur pent within the earth,
In the dead earth, beneath the road,
Sudden arose ! It swept along,
A muffled noise, a rumbling sound :
'Twas by a troop of miners made,
Plying with gunpowder their trade,
Some twenty fathoms under ground.”

I was scarce prepared, however, for excavations of such imposing extent as the one into which I found the vaulted corridor open. It forms a long gallery, extending for hundreds of yards on either hand, with an overhanging precipice bare to the hill-top leaning perilously over on the one side, and a range of supporting buttresses cut out of the living rock, and perforated with lofty archways, planting at measured distances their strong feet, on the other. Through the openings between the buttresses,—long since divested, by a shaggy vegetation, of every stiff angularity borrowed from the tool of the miner,—the red light of evening was streaming, in well-defined patches, on the gray rock and broken floor. Each huge buttress threw its broad bar of shadow in the same direction ; and thus the gallery, through its entire extent, was barred, zebra-like, with alternate belts of sun-light and gloom,—the “ ebon and ivory” of Sir Walter’s famed description. The rawness of artificial excavation has long since disappeared under the slow incrustations of myriads of lichens and mosses,—for the quarrier seems to have had done with the place for centuries ; and if I