Mount Shasta Collection

Poetry


MOUNT SHASTA

Behold the dread Mount Shasta, where it stands
Imperial midst the lesser heights, and, like
Some mighty, unimpassioned mind, companionless
And cold. The storms of Heaven may beat in wrath
Against it, but it stands in unpolluted
Grandeur still; and from the rolling mists upheaves
Its tower of pride e'en purer than before.
The wintry showers and white-winged tempests leave
Their frozen tributes on its brow, and it
Doth make of them an everlasting crown.
Thus doth it, day by day, and age by age,
Defy each stroke of time; still rising highest
Into Heaven!
Aspiring to the eagle's cloudless height,
No human foot has stained its snowy side;
No human breath has dimmed the icy mirror which
It holds unto the moon, and stars, and sov'reign sun.
We may not grow familiar with the secrets
Of its hoary top, whereon the Genius
Of that mountain builds his glorious throne!
Far lifted in boundless blue, he doth
Encircle, with his gaze supreme, the broad
Dominions of the west, which lie beneath
His feet, in pictures of sublime repose
No artist ever drew. He sees the tall,
Gigantic hills arise in silentness
And peace, and it the long review of distance
Range themselves in order grand. He sees the sunlight
Play upon the golden streams which through the valleys
Glide. He hears the music of the great and solemn sea,
And overlooks the huge old western wall
To view the birthplace of undying Melody!
Itself all light, save when some loftiest cloud
Doth for a while embrace its cold, forbidding
Form, that monarch mountain casts its mighty
Shadow down upon the crownless peaks below,
That, like inferior minds to some great
Spirit, stand in strong contrasted littleness!
All through the long and summery months of our
Most tranquil year, it points its icy shaft
On high, to catch the dazzling beams that fall
In showers of splendor round that crystal cone,
And roll in floods of far magnificence
Away from that lone, vast reflector in
The dome of Heaven.
Still watchful of the fertile
Vale and undulating plains below,
The grass grows greener in its shade, and sweeter bloom
The flowers. Strong purifier! from its snowy crest
The breezes cool are wafted to the "peaceful
Homes of men," who shelter at it feet, and love
To gaze upon its honored form, aye standing
There the guarantee of health and happiness.
Well might it win communities so blest
To loftier feelings and to nobler thoughts--
The great material symbol of eternal
Things! And well I ween, in after years, how
In the middle of his furrowed track the plowman
In sume sultry hour will pause, and wiping
From his brow the dusty sweat, with reverence
Gaze upon that hoary peak. The herdsman
Oft will reign his charger in the plain, and drink
Into his inmost soul the calm sublimity;
And little children, playing on the green, shall
Cease their sport, and turning to that mountain
Old, shall of their mother ask: "Who made it?"
And she shall answer--"God!"