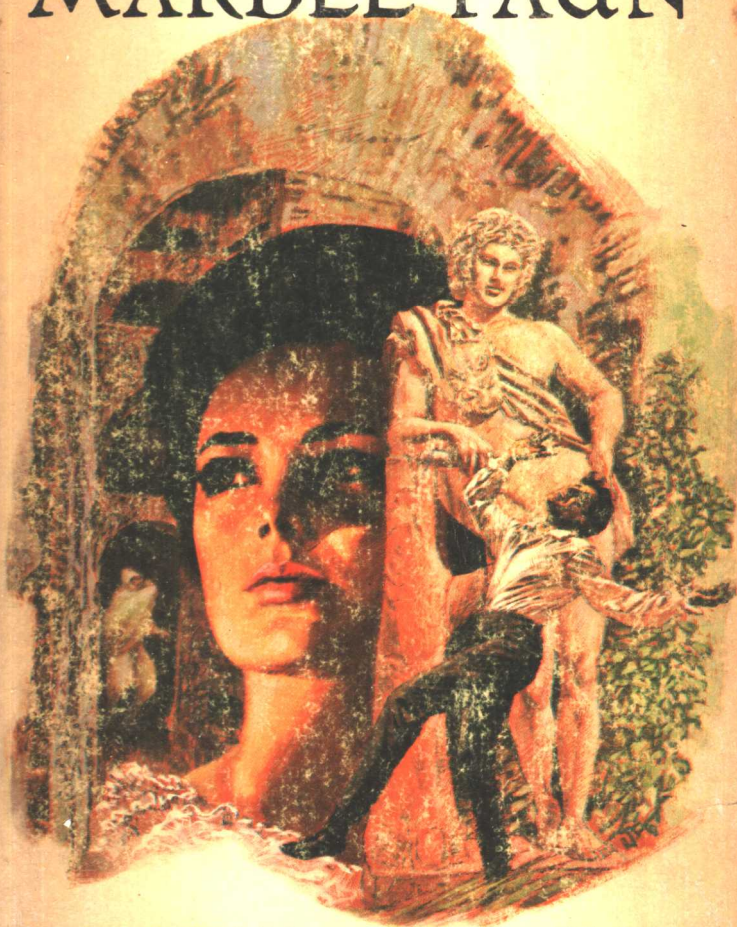


NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE
THE
MARBLE FAUN



Introduction by Neil H. Fisher

Complete and Unabridged

THE MARBLE FAUN

or The Romance of Monte Beni

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE



AIRMONT PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.
22 EAST 60TH STREET • NEW YORK 10022

An Airmont Classic

*specially selected for the Airmont Library
from the immortal literature of the world*

THE SPECIAL CONTENTS OF THIS EDITION

© Copyright, 1966, by
Airmont Publishing Company, Inc.

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY IN THE DOMINION OF CANADA
BY THE RYERSON PRESS, TORONTO

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE COLONIAL PRESS INC., CLINTON, MASSACHUSETTS

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. Miriam, Hilda, Kenyon, Donatello	9
2. The Faun	13
3. Subterranean Reminiscences	18
4. The Specter of the Catacomb	23
5. Miriam's Studio	30
6. The Virgin's Shrine	39
7. Beatrice	46
8. The Suburban Villa	51
9. The Faun and Nymph	56
10. The Sylvan Dance	61
11. Fragmentary Sentences	66
12. A Stroll on the Pincian	70
13. A Sculptor's Studio	80
14. Cleopatra	86
15. An Aesthetic Company	92
16. A Moonlight Ramble	99
17. Miriam's Trouble	107
18. On the Edge of a Precipice	112
19. The Faun's Transformation	120
20. The Burial Chant	124
21. The Dead Capuchin	130
22. The Medici Gardens	136
23. Miriam and Hilda	140
24. The Tower Among the Apennines	147
25. Sunshine	152
26. The Pedigree of Monte Beni	159
27. Myths	167
28. The Owl Tower	173
29. On the Battlements	179

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
30. Donatello's Bust	186
31. The Marble Saloon	191
32. Scenes by the Way	198
33. Pictured Windows	206
34. Market Day in Perugia	212
35. The Bronze Pontiff's Benediction	217
36. Hilda's Tower	223
37. The Emptiness of Picture Galleries	228
38. Altars and Incense	235
39. The World's Cathedral	241
40. Hilda and a Friend	247
41. Snowdrops and Maidenly Delights	254
42. Reminiscences of Miriam	260
43. The Extinction of a Lamp	266
44. The Deserted Shrine	272
45. The Flight of Hilda's Doves	279
46. A Walk on the Compagna	284
47. The Peasant and Contadina	289
48. A Scene in the Corso	296
49. A Frolic of the Carnival	302
50. Miriam, Hilda, Kenyon, Donatello	309
<i>Conclusion</i>	314

THE MARBLE FAUN



NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64) spent his childhood in Salem. The Salem of the nineteenth century, however, was neither the thriving seaport of the eighteenth century nor the Puritan stronghold of the seventeenth. It looked to the past. Hawthorne likewise possessed a strong interest in his Puritan ancestors. That his forebears had persecuted Quakers and hanged witches weighed heavily on the author throughout his life. While he could not accept the narrowness and intolerance of Puritanism, he could not forget its concern with sin, and his works center around moral problems.

Hawthorne's father died when the boy was four and his childhood must have been affected by the strange seclusion which his mother adopted thereafter. The sense of isolation that permeates his works was probably born at this time. The solitude of the strange household attracted him after his years at Bowdoin College and he partially withdrew from society for twelve years to dedicate himself to his craft. The laborious apprenticeship produced the style which was to bloom later but which bore no immediate fruit. His first

novel, *Fanshawe* (1828), was a premature effort which Hawthorne regretted almost immediately.

His engagement to Sophia Peabody in 1838 implied the need for a greater income than that provided by the modest success of *Twice-Told Tales* (1837), a collection of stories previously published in various magazines. By political appointment he procured a post in the Boston Custom House. When the political wind shifted, however, he lost his position and lived for a short time at Brook Farm, a socialist experiment.

In 1842, he married Miss Peabody and four idyllic years followed when the couple lived at the Old Manse, Concord. During this time, his literary interest turned from the tales and sketches he had been writing to the novel. Another Custom post, in Salem from 1846-9, was lost due to changing political fortunes, but during these years he had begun the work which was to alter his literary and financial fortunes.

The Scarlet Letter, 1850, won immediate public acclaim and gave Hawthorne the security and time which produced *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852).

Hawthorne's friendship with the new President, Franklin Pierce, brought him back into public service, this time as American Consul at Liverpool, England. This post, which he relinquished in 1857, plus an extended holiday, gave Hawthorne a seven-year residence in Europe, mostly in England. He spent over a year in Italy, however, and absorbed the moral and artistic atmosphere of Rome, which helped to produce *The Marble Faun* (1860). He returned to America the same year and maintained his political interest in the fortunes of his friend, President Pierce, until the author died in 1864.

While Nathaniel Hawthorne's antiquarian inclination was aroused early and while his stories and books are concerned primarily with the past, the author must not be regarded as an odd recluse. After the seclusion of his painstaking apprenticeship, he enjoyed a happily married life, he held several busy Custom posts, and he performed creditably his duties in the Liverpool consulate. Apart from such public

offices, he found time to produce the first great novel in American literature, several lesser but certainly creditable novels, and a considerable number of sketches and tales.

Although our immediate concern is to consider *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne cannot be considered without some mention of *The Scarlet Letter*. This masterpiece, which captures the terror of Puritan intolerance and hypocrisy, presents in its finest form the blend of the actual and the imaginary, of the realistic and the mysterious, of the human and the allegorical for which Hawthorne's name is synonymous. The weight of the past, the allegorical element, and the anguish of moral problems are present in both works. Similarly, the careful concern for structure, the precise choice of detail, and the deliberate prose style are found in both. Yet the allegory of *The Marble Faun* is much more vague and its story less compelling than the earlier but superior work. Nevertheless, Hawthorne's Italian novel arouses considerable thought and interest.

Hawthorne thought of himself as a romance-writer and we should consider *The Marble Faun* as a romance. The concept of a modern faun is fanciful; it belongs to the realm of the imagination. Hawthorne had no patience with those who asked him if Donatello's ears were really furry. His Romance pictured a world where the actual and the imaginary meet, and to Hawthorne such a world could present moral truths as effectively as a factual one could.

Other romantic tendencies are present: Hawthorne's feeling for the strange and mysterious, his love of the past, and his concern for the beauty of Rome. Miriam's hidden past, the catacomb and the specter it produces, the legends of Monte Beni, the sealed packet with its strange instructions shroud the novel in mystery. The history of Rome, revealed in its buildings, its art, and its old families, continually permeates the action which takes place. Such a past as Rome possesses heightens the mystery of the present by the shadows it casts upon the unfolding drama. The novel presents also the art of Rome in all its forms: painting, sculpture, and

architecture. Our interest lies with people drawn from the world of art and we share their responses to the art of the historic city which so fascinated the American author.

The elements above may suggest that Hawthorne's work is not unlike the Gothic Romance; if so, it is a Gothic Romance with strong Puritanic overtones. The plot revolves around four friends: the delicate, religious, fair-haired Hilda, who glides about Rome in her white robe motivated by the spirit both of her Puritan ancestors and the old Masters of Italian art; the talented, passionate, beautiful, emotionally wrought, dark-haired Miriam; the stable, philosophical sculptor Kenyon; and the simple, carefree, natural Donatello. The crime committed by Donatello, with the tacit assent of Miriam, and witnessed by Hilda, changes the lives of all.

The novel then becomes an examination of the moral consequences of sin. This is revealed primarily through the changes wrought in Donatello, the "natural" man. His likeness to the Faun of Praxiteles, the history of the Counts of Monte Beni, and his simple, happy, completely emotional character suggest that Donatello represents, at the beginning of the book, the noble savage, the state of man in Eden, the soul without conscience and therefore without knowledge either of vice or virtue. The unhappiness and the brooding melancholy which dominate his life after his crime present the burden that sin casts on man. The crime is not without its enlightening aspect, and this aspect of a change in Donatello later prompts Kenyon and Miriam to wonder if sin is necessary for nobility and wisdom. The study of the nature of sin takes on interesting shades as Miriam ponders her involvement. Does the fact that she willed the crime in her heart and with her eyes make the crime weigh as heavily on her as on Donatello? We see also her anguish at what she has done to her admirer. A further look at the problem of sin is provided by the distraught witness, Hilda. Her knowledge and its effect on her friendship, her art, and her soul enlarge the ethical problem which Hawthorne has tackled. Such moral dilemmas clearly indicate the Puritan influence on the author, but the tolerance and sympathy which Hawthorne suggests would have shocked his ancestors.

When one recalls the symbolism of *The Scarlet Letter*, it is natural to speculate on the allegory of *The Marble Faun*. The three sinners—Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, and Roger Chillingworth—and the different shades of sin which they present invite comparison. The role of the A and the symbolical nature of the child, Pearl, suggest that in Hawthorne people and objects have different levels of meaning. The contrasting characters of Miriam and Hilda in their roles of the mysterious dark lady and the fair-haired Saxon carry with them numerous connotations. The flame at the Virgin's shrine, the shadow that dogs Miriam's steps, the Sunshine wine of Monte Beni, and the various myths and works of art take on deeper meaning when compared with the events of the story.

But the main allegory is the relation between Donatello and the Faun. Their similarity is announced in the first chapter and developed very clearly in the second. The alteration in Donatello's nature which begins with his association with Miriam becomes prominent after his crime. The changes in the lives of Hilda and Donatello prompt Miriam to comment that "every crime destroys more Edens than our own." The history of the Counts of Monte Beni which Kenyon learns and his observations of the changed Donatello reveal that a natural spirit has gained a conscience. This is clearly shown when Donatello cannot commune with the happy creatures of nature as he once could. His altered state is certainly likened to that of Adam and Eve after Man's first sin.

Miriam comments directly on the parallel: "The story of the fall of man! Is it not repeated in our romance of Monte Beni?" But she goes further and wonders whether the sin is a blessing or a curse: "Was that very sin,—into which Adam precipitated himself and all his race,—was it the destined means by which, over a long pathway of toil and sorrow, we are to attain a higher, brighter, and profounder happiness, than our lost birthright gave?" Likewise, Kenyon feels that sin has "educated Donatello, and elevated him." The allegory of *The Marble Faun* is fascinating, but to explain it precisely and to draw a definite moral is impossible. Such explicitness belongs not to the realm of romance.

The symbolic import may suggest this question: Is the novel Miriam's or Donatello's? Miriam certainly emerges as the stronger person but the novel is structured to allow considerable sympathy for each of the four main characters. The first half of the work is primarily Miriam's, with Donatello increasing in importance. The third quarter belongs to the faun of Monte Beni, with Kenyon gaining significance and Miriam never forgotten. The last section belongs to Hilda and Kenyon. A fifth person, the narrator, intrudes upon the story. Hawthorne does this to lighten the weight of his moral discussions, to state certain truths directly, to soften the allegorical aspects of the novel, and to elicit greater belief through his supposed acquaintance with Kenyon and Hilda. Hawthorne's detailed description of Rome is justified because of the mood which he evokes and because of the world of art he presents.

Hawthorne has presented three worlds in *The Marble Faun*: the world of art, the world of artists, and the world of morals and religion. These are bathed in mystery and in the ambiguity of allegory, but they prove both interesting and thought-provoking.

January 3, 1966

NEIL H. FISHER,
Department of English,
Nova Scotia Teachers College,
Truro, N.S.

1. *Miriam, Hilda, Kenyon, Donatello*

Four individuals, in whose fortunes we should be glad to interest the reader, happened to be standing in one of the saloons of the sculpture gallery in the Capitol at Rome. It was that room (the first, after ascending the staircase) in the center of which reclines the noble and most pathetic figure of the Dying Gladiator, just sinking into his death swoon. Around the walls stand the Antinoüs, the Amazon, the Lycian Apollo, the Juno; all famous productions of antique sculpture, and still shining in the undiminished majesty and beauty of their ideal life, although the marble that embodies them is yellow with time, and perhaps corroded by the damp earth in which they lay buried for centuries. Here, likewise, is seen a symbol (as apt at this moment as it was two thousand years ago) of the Human Soul, with its choice of Innocence or Evil close at hand, in the pretty figure of a child, clasping a dove to her bosom, but assaulted by a snake.

From one of the windows of this saloon, we may see a flight of broad stone steps, descending alongside the antique and massive foundation of the Capitol, towards the battered triumphal arch of Septimius Severus, right below. Farther on, the eye skirts along the edge of the desolate Forum (where Roman washerwomen hang out their linen to the sun), passing over a shapeless confusion of modern edifices, piled rudely up with ancient brick and stone, and over the domes of Christian churches, built on the old pavements of heathen temples, and supported by the very pillars that once upheld them. At a distance beyond—yet but a little way, considering how much history is heaped into the intervening space—rises the great sweep of the Coliseum, with the blue sky brightening through its upper tier of arches. Far off, the view is shut in by the Alban Mountains, looking just the same, amid all this decay and change, as when Romulus gazed thitherward over his half-finished wall.

We glance hastily at these things—at this bright sky, and those blue distant mountains, and at the ruins, Etruscan, Roman, Christian, venerable with a threefold antiquity, and at the company of world-famous statues in the saloon—in the hope of putting the reader into that state of feeling which is experienced oftenest at Rome. It is a vague sense of ponderous

remembrances; a perception of such weight and density in a bygone life, of which this spot was the center, that the present moment is pressed down or crowded out, and our individual affairs and interests are but half as real here as elsewhere. Viewed through this medium, our narrative—into which are woven some airy and unsubstantial threads, intermixed with others, twisted out of the commonest stuff of human existence—may seem not widely different from the texture of all our lives.

Side by side with the massiveness of the Roman past, all matters that we handle or dream of nowadays look evanescent and visionary alike.

It might be that the four persons whom we are seeking to introduce were conscious of this dreamy character of the present, as compared with the square blocks of granite wherewith the Romans built their lives. Perhaps it even contributed to the fanciful merriment which was just now their mood. When we find ourselves fading into shadows and unrealities, it seems hardly worth while to be sad, but rather to laugh as gaily as we may, and ask little reason wherefore.

Of these four friends of ours, three were artists, or connected with art; and, at this moment, they had been simultaneously struck by a resemblance between one of the antique statues, a well-known masterpiece of Grecian sculpture, and a young Italian, the fourth member of their party.

"You must needs confess, Kenyon," said a dark-eyed young woman, whom her friends called Miriam, "that you never chiseled out of marble, nor wrought in clay, a more vivid likeness than this, cunning a bust maker as you think yourself. The portraiture is perfect in character, sentiment, and feature. If it were a picture, the resemblance might be half illusive and imaginary; but here, in this Pentelic marble, it is a substantial fact, and may be tested by absolute touch and measurement. Our friend Donatello is the very Faun of Praxiteles. Is it not true, Hilda?"

"Not quite—almost—yes, I really think so," replied Hilda, a slender, brown-haired New England girl, whose perceptions of form and expression were wonderfully clear and delicate. "If there is any difference between the two faces, the reason may be, I suppose, that the Faun dwelt in woods and fields, and consorted with his like; whereas Donatello has known cities a little, and such people as ourselves. But the resemblance is very close, and very strange."

"Not so strange," whispered Miriam mischievously, "for no faun in Arcadia was ever a greater simpleton than Donatello. He has hardly a man's share of wit, small as that may be. It is

a pity there are no longer any of this congenial race of rustic creatures for our friend to consort with!"

"Hush, naughty one!" returned Hilda. "You are very ungrateful, for you well know he has wit enough to worship you, at all events."

"Then the greater fool he!" said Miriam, so bitterly that Hilda's quiet eyes were somewhat startled.

"Donatello, my dear friend," said Kenyon, in Italian, "pray gratify us all by taking the exact attitude of this statue."

The young man laughed, and threw himself into the position in which the statue has been standing for two or three thousand years. In truth, allowing for the difference of costume, and if a lion's skin could have been substituted for his modern talma, and a rustic pipe for his stick, Donatello might have figured perfectly as the marble Faun, miraculously softened into flesh and blood.

"Yes, the resemblance is wonderful," observed Kenyon, after examining the marble and the man with the accuracy of a sculptor's eye. "There is one point, however, or, rather, two points in respect to which our friend Donatello's abundant curls will not permit us to say whether the likeness is carried into minute detail."

And the sculptor directed the attention of the party to the ears of the beautiful statue which they were contemplating.

But we must do more than merely refer to this exquisite work of art; it must be described, however inadequate may be the effort to express its magic peculiarity in words.

The Faun is the marble image of a young man, leaning his right arm on the trunk or stump of a tree; one hand hangs carelessly by his side; in the other he holds the fragment of a pipe, or some such sylvan instrument of music. His only garment—a lion's skin, with the claws upon his shoulder—falls halfway down his back, leaving the limbs and entire front of the figure nude. The form, thus displayed, is marvelously graceful, but has a fuller and more rounded outline, more flesh, and less of heroic muscle than the old sculptors were wont to assign to their types of masculine beauty. The character of the face corresponds with the figure; it is most agreeable in outline and feature, but rounded and somewhat voluptuously developed, especially about the throat and chin; the nose is almost straight, but very slightly curves inward, thereby acquiring an indescribable charm of geniality and humor. The mouth, with its full yet delicate lips, seems so nearly to smile outright that it calls forth a responsive smile. The whole statue—unlike anything else that ever was wrought in that severe material of marble—conveys the idea

of an amiable and sensual creature, easy, mirthful, apt for jollity, yet not incapable of being touched by pathos. It is impossible to gaze long at this stone image without conceiving a kindly sentiment towards it, as if its substance were warm to the touch, and imbued with actual life. It comes very close to some of our pleasantest sympathies.

Perhaps it is the very lack of moral severity, of any high and heroic ingredient in the character of the Faun, that makes it so delightful an object to the human eye and to the frailty of the human heart. The being here represented is endowed with no principle of virtue, and would be incapable of comprehending such; but he would be true and honest by dint of his simplicity. We should expect from him no sacrifice or effort for an abstract cause; there is not an atom of martyr's stuff in all that softened marble; but he has a capacity for strong and warm attachment, and might act devotedly through its impulse, and even die for it at need. It is possible, too, that the Faun might be educated through the medium of his emotions, so that the coarser animal portion of his nature might eventually be thrown into the background, though never utterly expelled.

The animal nature, indeed, is a most essential part of the Faun's composition; for the characteristics of the brute creation meet and combine with those of humanity in this strange yet true and natural conception of antique poetry and art. Praxiteles has subtly diffused throughout his work that mute mystery which so hopelessly perplexes us whenever we attempt to gain an intellectual or sympathetic knowledge of the lower orders of creation. The riddle is indicated, however, only by two definite signs; these are the two ears of the Faun, which are leaf-shaped, terminating in little peaks, like those of some species of animals. Though not so seen in the marble, they are probably to be considered as clothed in fine, downy fur. In the coarser representations of this class of mythological creatures, there is another token of brute kindred—a certain caudal appendage—which, if the Faun of Praxiteles must be supposed to possess it at all, is hidden by the lion's skin that forms his garment. The pointed and furry ears, therefore, are the sole indications of his wild, forest nature.

Only a sculptor of the finest imagination, the most delicate taste, the sweetest feeling, and the rarest artistic skill—in a word, a sculptor and a poet, too—could have first dreamed of a faun in this guise, and then have succeeded in imprisoning the sportive and frisky thing in marble. Neither man nor animal, and yet no monster, but a being in whom both races meet on friendly ground. The idea grows coarse as we handle it, and hardens in our grasp. But, if the spectator broods long

over the statue, he will be conscious of its spell; all the pleasantness of sylvan life, all the genial and happy characteristics of creatures that dwell in woods and fields, will seem to be mingled and kneaded into one substance, along with the kindred qualities in the human soul. Trees, grass, flowers, woodland streamlets, cattle, deer, and unsophisticated man. The essence of all these was compressed long ago, and still exists, within that discolored marble surface of the Faun of Praxiteles.

And, after all, the idea may have been no dream, but rather a poet's reminiscence of a period when man's affinity with nature was more strict, and his fellowship with every living thing more intimate and dear.

2. *The Faun*

"Donatello," playfully cried Miriam, "do not leave us in this perplexity! Shake aside those brown curls, my friend, and let us see whether this marvelous resemblance extends to the very tips of the ears. If so, we shall like you all the better!"

"No, no, dearest signorina," answered Donatello, laughing, but with a certain earnestness. "I entreat you to take the tips of my ears for granted." As he spoke, the young Italian made a skip and jump, light enough for a veritable faun, so as to place himself quite beyond the reach of the fair hand that was outstretched, as if to settle the matter by actual examination. "I shall be like a wolf of the Apennines," he continued, taking his stand on the other side of the Dying Gladiator, "if you touch my ears ever so softly. None of my race could endure it. It has always been a tender point with my forefathers and me."

He spoke in Italian, with the Tuscan rusticity of accent, and an unshaped sort of utterance, betokening that he must heretofore have been chiefly conversant with rural people.

"Well, well," said Miriam, "your tender point—your two tender points, if you have them—shall be safe, so far as I am concerned. But how strange this likeness is, after all—and how delightful, if it really includes the pointed ears! Oh, it is impossible, of course," she continued, in English, "with a real and commonplace young man like Donatello; but you see how

this peculiarity defines the position of the Faun; and, while putting him where he cannot exactly assert his brotherhood, still disposes us kindly towards the kindred creature. He is not supernatural, but just on the verge of nature, and yet within it. What is the nameless charm of this idea, Hilda? You can feel it more delicately than I."

"It perplexes me," said Hilda thoughtfully, and shrinking a little. "Neither do I quite like to think about it."

"But, surely," said Kenyon, "you agree with Miriam and me that there is something very touching and impressive in this statue of the Faun. In some long-past age, he must really have existed. Nature needed, and still needs, this beautiful creature; standing betwixt man and animal, sympathizing with each, comprehending the speech of either race, and interpreting the whole existence of one to the other. What a pity that he has forever vanished from the hard and dusty paths of life—unless," added the sculptor, in a sportive whisper, "Donatello be actually he!"

"You cannot conceive how this fantasy takes hold of me," responded Miriam, between jest and earnest. "Imagine now a real being, similar to this mythic Faun; how happy, how genial, how satisfactory would be his life, enjoying the warm, sensuous, earthy side of nature; reveling in the merriment of woods and streams; living as our four-footed kindred do—as mankind did in its innocent childhood, before sin, sorrow, or morality itself had ever been thought of! Ah! Kenyon, if Hilda and you and I—if I, at least—had pointed ears! For I suppose the Faun had no conscience, no remorse, no burden on the heart, no troublesome recollections of any sort; no dark future, either."

"What a tragic tone was that last, Miriam!" said the sculptor; and, looking into her face, he was startled to behold it pale and tear-stained. "How suddenly this mood has come over you!"

"Let it go as it came," said Miriam, "like a thunder shower in this Roman sky. All is sunshine again, you see!"

Donatello's refractoriness as regarded his ears had evidently cost him something, and he now came close to Miriam's side, gazing at her with an appealing air, as if to solicit forgiveness. His mute, helpless gesture of entreaty had something pathetic in it, and yet might well enough excite a laugh, so like it was to what you may see in the aspect of a hound when he thinks himself in fault or disgrace. It was difficult to make out the character of this young man. So full of animal life as he was, so joyous in his deportment, so handsome, so physically well-developed, he made no impression of incompleteness, of maimed or stunted nature. And yet, in social intercourse, these