

appeared to me bare and ugly. I own to having expected something different, but the transition was disappointing. The misty outlines of beauty that had floated past my closed eyes were exchanged for numberless plain and ugly faces, many, alas! painted and gaudily adorned. Yet this must have been a freak of my imagination, as, at the altitude I gazed from, a very powerful glass would have been necessary to distinguish these blemishes. I sat silent and uninterested, caring naught about the play, naught about the music that softly accompanied the airs, and wondering why it was that the potent drug produced me no greater pleasure. Suddenly a sort of column of flame whirled past me and forced me to close my eyes. When I opened them again I was awed at the change which had taken place; the theatre was gone, and instead of it I sat high up in a mighty dome whose sides were lost in darkness, above, below, around, and of which the end opposite to me seemed distant as the end of the world. This great void was lighted up by innumerable groups of light that shed a mellow radiance around, but were not powerful enough to dispel the surrounding gloom; by these lights more than by any visible form could I tell that it was within a dome I sat, solitary and silent. Presently the music, which had ceased for a moment, stole once more into being, and flowed out of or through the darkness which it gradually and rapidly changed into one limitless ocean of light and sound, so mingled together, so constantly shifting that I strove vainly to distinguish between the dazzling beams and the strange, sweet notes. Then the sea of light began to divide in the centre and to change into molten clouds, as it were, and in the space thus encircled I beheld the veritable vision of Coleridge, a vision related in his own beauteous language, and which I knew well—

“It was an Abyssinian maid,  
And on her Dulcimer she played,  
Singing of Mount Abora.”

Was I dreaming? Was this but a phantom of my brain? As I looked and looked at the fair, fragile form, I swore it was true; as I heard the prolonged and mysterious strains of music rise higher and higher, once more blending with the ever shifting light, I knew it was false. The truth is, I was right and wrong. I was assuredly in no dome, such as Martin depicts in his *Pandemonium*, I really saw no Abyssinian maid, and I was after all